622

10/6

TALES OF THE CRUSADERS.

...jója Angol. 1829
622

TALES

OF THE CRUSADERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY, QUENTIN DURWARD," &c.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

The Betrothed.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND CO. EDINBURGH
AND HURST, ROBINSON, AND CO. LONDON.

1825.

622

INTRODUCTION.

MINUTES

OF SEDERUNT OF A GENERAL MEETING OF THE SHARE-HOLDERS DESIGNING TO FORM A JOINT-STOCK COMPANY, UNITED FOR THE PURPOSE OF WRITING AND PUBLISHING THE CLASS OF WORKS CALLED THE WAVERLEY NOVELS,

HELD

IN THE WATERLOO TAVERN, REGENT'S BRIDGE,

Edinburgh, 1st *June*, 1825.

[THE reader must have remarked, that the various editions of the proceedings at this meeting were given in the public papers with rather more than usual inaccuracy. The cause of this was no ill-timed delicacy on the part of the gentlemen of the press to assert their privilege of universal presence wherever a few

are met together, and to commit to the public prints whatever may then and there pass of the most private nature. But very unusual and arbitrary methods were resorted to on the present occasion to prevent the reporters using a right which is generally conceded to them by almost all meetings, whether of a political or commercial description. Our own reporter, indeed, was bold enough to secrete himself under the Secretary's table, and was not discovered till the meeting was well nigh over. We are sorry to say, he suffered much in person from fists and toes, and two or three principal pages were torn out of his notebook, which occasions his report to break off abruptly. We cannot but consider this behaviour as more particularly illiberal on the part of men who are themselves a kind of gentlemen of the press; and, considering the annoying frequency of their publications, even of the periodical press; and they ought to consider themselves as fortunate that the misused reporter has sought no other vengeance than from the tone of acidity with which he has seasoned his account of their proceedings.—*Edinburgh Newspaper.*]

A MEETING of the gentlemen and others interested in the celebrated publications call-

ed the Waverley Novels, having been called by public advertisement, the same was respectably attended by various literary characters of eminence. And it being in the first place understood that individuals were to be denominated by the names assigned to them in the publications in question, Eidolon was unanimously called to the chair, and Jonathan Oldbuck, Esq. of Monkbarns, was requested to act as secretary.

The Preses then addressed the meeting to the following purpose :—

"GENTLEMEN,

"I need scarce remind you, that we have a joint interest in the valuable Property which has accumulated under our common labours. While the public have been idly engaged in ascribing to one individual or another the immense mass of va-

rious matter which the labours of many had accumulated, you, gentlemen, well know, that every person in this numerous assembly has had his share, before now, in the honours and profits of our common success. It is indeed to me a mystery how the sharp-sighted could suppose so huge a mass of sense and nonsense, jest and earnest, humorous and pathetic, good, bad, and indifferent, amounting to scores of volumes, could be the work of one hand, when we know the doctrine so well laid down by the immortal Adam Smith, concerning the division of labour. Were those who entertained an opinion so strange, not wise enough to know that it requires twenty pair of hands to make a thing so trifling as a pin—twenty couple of dogs to kill an animal so insignificant as a fox?"—

"Hout, man!" said a stout countryman,

"I have a grew-bitch at hame will worry the best tod in Pomaragaires, before ye could say Dumpling."

"Who is that person?" said the Preses, with some warmth, as it appeared to us.

"A son of Dandie Dinmont's," answered the unabashed rustic. "God, ye may mind him, I think!—ane o' the best in your aught, I reckon. And, ye see, I am come into the farm, and maybe something mair, and a wheen shares in this buik-trade of yours."

"Well, well," replied the Preses, "peace, I pray thee, peace.—Gentlemen, when thus interrupted, I was on the point of introducing the business of this meeting, which, as is known to most of you, is the discussion of a proposition now on your table, which I myself had the honour to suggest at last meeting, namely, that we do apply to the

Legislature for an Act of Parliament in ordinary, to associate us into a corporate body, and give us a *persona standi in judicio*, with full power to prosecute and bring to conviction all encroachers upon our exclusive privilege, in the manner therein to be made and provided. In a letter from the ingenious Mr Dousterswivel which I have received——"

Oldbuck, warmly—"I object to that fellow's name being mentioned; he is a common swindler."

"For shame! Mr Oldbuck," said the Preses, "to use such terms respecting the ingenious inventor of the great patent machine erected at Groningen, where they put in raw hemp at one end, and take out ruffled shirts at the other, without aid of hackle or rippling-comb, loom, shuttle, or

weaver, scissars, needle, or seamstress. He is just completing it, by addition of a piece of machinery to perform the work of the laundress; but when it was exhibited before his honour the burgo-master, it had the inconvenience of heating the smoothing-irons red hot; excepting which, the experiment was entirely satisfactory. He will become as rich as a Jew."

"Well," added Mr Oldbuck, "if the scoundrel——"

"Scoundrel, Mr Oldbuck," said the Preses, "is a most unseemly expression, and I must call you to order. Mr Dousterswivel is only an eccentric genius."

"Pretty much the same in the Greek," muttered Mr Oldbuck; and then said aloud, "and if this eccentric genius has work enough in singeing the Dutchman's linen, what the devil has he to do here?"

"Why, he is of opinion, that at the expense of a little mechanism, some part of the labour of composition of these novels might be saved by the use of steam."

There was a murmur of disapprobation at this proposal, and the words, "Blown up," and "Bread taken out of our mouths;" and "They might as well construct a steam parson," were whispered. And it was not without repeated calls to order, that the Preses obtained an opportunity of resuming his address.

"Order!—Order! Pray, support the chair! Hear, hear, hear the chair!"

"Gentlemen, it is to be premised, that this mechanical operation can only apply to those parts of the narrative which are at present composed out of common-places, such as the love-speeches of the hero, the

description of the heroine's person, the moral observations of all sorts, and the distribution of happiness at the conclusion of the piece. Mr Dousterswivel has sent me some drawings, which go far to show, that, by placing the words and phrases technically employed on these subjects, in a sort of frame-work, like that of the Sage of Laputa, and changing them by such a mechanical process as that by which weavers of damask alter their patterns, many new and happy combinations cannot fail to occur, while the author, tired of pumping his own brains, may have an agreeable relaxation in the use of his fingers."

"I speak for information, Mr Preses," said the Rev. Mr Lawrence Templeton; "but I am inclined to suppose the late publication of Walladmor to have been

the work of Dousterswivel, by the help of the steam-engine."

"For shame, Mr Templeton," said the Preses; "there are good things in Wallad-mor, I assure you, had the writer known anything about the country in which he laid the scene."

"Or had he had the wit, like some of our-selves, to lay the scene in such a remote or distant country that nobody should be able to back-speer him," said Mr Oldbuck.

"Why, as to that," said the Preses, "you must consider the thing was got up for the German market, where folks are no better judges of Welsh manners than of Welsh crw."

"I make it my prayer that this be not found the fault of our own next venture," said Dr Dryasdust, pointing to some books which

lay on the table. "I fear the manners expressed in that 'Betrothed' of ours, will scarce meet the approbation of the Cymmerodion; I could have wished that Llhuyd had been looked into—that Powel had been consulted—that Lewis's History had been quoted, the preliminary dissertations particularly, in order to give due weight to the work."

"Weight?" said Captain Clutterbuck; "by my soul, it is heavy enough already, Doctor."

"Speak to the chair," said the Preses, rather peevishly.

"To the chair, then, I say it," said Captain Clutterbuck, "that 'The Betrothed' is heavy enough to break down the chair of John of Gaunt, or Cador-Edris itself. I must add, however, that, in my poor mind, 'The Talisman' goes more trippingly off."

"It is not for me to speak," said the worthy minister of Saint Ronan's Well; "but yet I must say, that, being so long engaged upon the Siege of Ptolemais, my work ought to have been brought out, humble though it be, before any other upon a similar subject at least."

"Your Siege, Parson !" said Mr Oldbuck, with great contempt; "will you speak of your paltry prose-doings in my presence, whose great Historical Poem, in twenty books, with notes in proportion, has been postponed *ad Græcas Kalendas* ?"

The Preses, who appeared to suffer a great deal during this discussion, now spoke with dignity and determination. "Gentlemen," he said, "this sort of discussion is highly irregular. There is a question before you, and to that, gentlemen, I must

confine your attention. Priority of publication, let me remind you, gentlemen, is always referred to the Committee of Criticism, whose determination on such subjects is without appeal. I declare I will leave the chair, if any more extraneous matter be introduced.—And now, gentlemen, that we are once more in order, I would wish to have some gentleman speak upon the question, whether, as associated to carry on a joint-stock trade in fictitious narrative, in prose and verse, we ought not to be incorporated by Act of Parliament? What say you, gentlemen, to the proposal? *Vis unita fortior*, is an old and true adage."

"*Societas mater discordiarum*, is a brocard as ancient and as veritable," said Oldbuck, who seemed determined, on this occasion, to be pleased with no proposal that was countenanced by the chair.

"Come, Monkbarns," said the Preses, in his most coaxing manner, "you have studied the monastic institutions deeply, and know there must be an union of persons and talents to do anything respectable, and attain a due ascendance over the spirit of the age. *Tres faciunt collegium*—it takes three monks to make a convent."

"And nine tailors to make a man," replied Oldbuck, not in the least softened in his opposition; "a quotation as much to the purpose as the other."

"Come, come," said the Preses, "you know the Prince of Orange said to Mr Seymour, 'Without an association, we are a rope of sand.'"

"I know," replied Oldbuck, "it would have been as seemly that none of the old leaven had been displayed on this occasion,

though you be the author of a Jacobite novel. I know nothing of the Prince of Orange after 1688; but I have heard a good deal of the immortal William the Third."

"And, to the best of my recollection," said Mr Templeton, whispering Oldbuck, "it was Seymour made the remark to the Prince, not the Prince to Seymour. But this is a specimen of our friend's accuracy, poor gentleman! He trusts too much to his memory! of late years—failing fast, sir—breaking up."

"And breaking down, too," said Mr Oldbuck. "But what can you expect of a man too fond of his own hasty and flashy compositions, to take the assistance of men of reading and of solid parts?"

"No whispering—no caballing—no pri-

vate business, gentlemen," said the unfortunate Preses,—who reminded us somewhat of a Highland drover, engaged in gathering and keeping in the straight road his excursive black cattle.

"I have not yet heard," he continued, "a single reasonable objection to applying for the Act of Parliament, of which the draught lies on the table. You must be aware that the extremes of rude and of civilized society are, in these our days, on the point of approaching to each other. In the patriarchal period, a man is his own weaver, tailor, butcher, shoemaker, and so forth; and, in the age of Stock-companies, as the present may be called, an individual may be said, in one sense, to exercise the same plurality of trades. In fact, a man who has dipt largely into these speculations, may

combine his own expenditure with the improvement of his own income, just like the ingenious hydraulic machine, which, by its very waste, raises its own supplies of water. Such a person buys his bread from his own Baking Company, his milk and cheese from his own Dairy Company, takes off a new coat for the benefit of his own Clothing Company, illuminates his house to advance his own Gas Establishment, and drinks an additional bottle of wine for the benefit of the General Wine Importation Company. Every act, which would otherwise be one of mere extravagance, is, to such a person, seasoned with the *odor lucri*, and reconciled to prudence. Even if the price of the article consumed be extravagant, and the quality indifferent, the person, who is in a manner his own customer, is only imposed upon for

his own benefit. Nay, if the Joint-stock Company of Undertakers shall unite with the Medical Faculty, as proposed by the late facetious Doctor G——, under the firm of Death and the Doctor, the share-holder might contrive to secure to his heirs a handsome slice of his own death-bed and funeral expenses. In short, Stock-Companies are the fashion of the age, and an Incorporating Act will, I think, be particularly useful in bringing back the body, over whom I have the honour to preside, to a spirit of subordination, highly necessary to success in every enterprize where joint wisdom, talent, and labour, are to be employed. It is with regret that I state, that, besides several differences amongst yourselves, I have not myself for some time been treated with that deference among you

which circumstances entitled me to expect."

"*Hinc illæ lachrymæ,*" muttered Mr Oldbuck.

"But," continued the Chairman, "I see other gentlemen impatient to deliver their opinions, and I desire to stand in no man's way. I therefore—my place in this chair forbidding me to originate the motion—beg some gentleman may move a committee for revising the draught of the bill now upon the table, and which has been duly circulated among those having interest, and take the necessary measures to bring it before the House early next session."

There was a short murmur in the meeting, and at length Mr Oldbuck again rose. "It seems, sir," he said, addressing the chair, "that no one present is willing to

make the motion you point at. I am sorry no more qualified person has taken on him to show any reasons in the contrair, and that it has fallen on me, as we Scotsmen say, to bell-the-cat with you; anent whilk phrase, Pitscottie hath a pleasant jest of the great Earl of Angus."

Here a gentleman whispered the speaker, "Have a care of Pitscottie," and Mr Oldbuck, as if taking the hint, went on.

"But that's neither here nor there.—Well, gentlemen, to be short, I think it unnecessary to enter into the general reasonings whilk have this day been delivered, as I may say, *ex cathedra*; nor will I charge our worthy Preses with an attempt to obtain over us, *per ambages*, and under colour of an Act of Parliament, a despotic authority, inconsistent with our freedom: But this I

will say, that times are so much changed above stairs, that whereas last year you might have obtained an act incorporating a Stock Company for riddling ashes, you will not be able to procure one this year for gathering pearls. What signifies, then, wasting the time of the meeting, by inquiring whether or not we ought to go in at a door which we know to be bolted and barred in our face, and in the face of all the companies for fire or air, land or water, which we have of late seen blighted?"

Here there was a general clamour, seemingly of approbation, in which the words might be distinguished, "Needless to think of it"—"Money thrown away"—"Lost before the committee," &c. &c. &c. But above the tumult, the voices of two gentlemen, in different corners of the room, an-

swered each other clear and loud, like the blows of the two figures on Saint Dunstan's clock; and although the Chairman, in much agitation, endeavoured to silence them, his interruption had only the effect of cutting their words up into syllables, thus,—

First Voice. "The Lord Chan——"

Second Voice. "Lord Lau——"

Chairman, (*loudly.*) "Scandalum magnatum."

First Voice. "The Lord Chancel——"

Second Voice. "The Lord Lauder——"

Chairman, (*louder yet.*) "Breach of Privilege."

First Voice. "The Lord Chancellor—"

Second Voice. "My Lord Lauderdale—"

Chairman, (*at the highest pitch of his voice.*) "Called before the House."

Both Voices together. "Will never consent to such a bill."

A general assent seemed to follow this last proposition, which was propounded with as much emphasis as could be contributed by the united clappers of the whole meeting, joined to those of the voices already mentioned.

Several persons present seemed to consider the business of the meeting as ended, and were beginning to handle their hats and canes, with a view to departure, when the Chairman, who had thrown himself back in his chair with an air of manifest mortification and displeasure, again drew himself up, and commanded attention. All stopped, though some shrugged their shoulders, as if under the predominating influence of what is called a *bore*. But the

tenor of his discourse soon excited anxious attention.

"I perceive, gentlemen," he said, "that you are like the young birds, who are impatient to leave their mother's nest—take care your own pen-feathers are strong enough to support you; since, as for my part, I am tired of supporting on my wing such a set of ungrateful gulls. But it signifies nothing speaking—I will no longer avail myself of such weak ministers as you—I will discard you—I will unbeget you, as Old Absolute says—I will leave you and your whole hacked stock in trade—your caverns and your castles—your modern antiques and your antiquated moderns—your confusion of times, manners, and circumstances—your properties, as player-folk say of scenery and dresses—the whole of your exhausted

expedients, to the fools who choose to deal with them. I will vindicate my own fame with my own right-hand, without appealing to such halting assistants,

> Whom I have used for sport, rather than need.

—I will lay my foundations better than on quick-sands—I will rear my structure of better materials than painted cards;—in a word, I will write HISTORY."

There was a tumult of surprise, amid which our reporter detected the following expressions:—"The devil you will!"—"You, my dear sir, *you?*"—"The old gentleman forgets that he is the greatest liar since Sir John Mandeville."

"Not the worse historian for that," said Oldbuck, "since history, you know, is half fiction."

"I'll answer for that half," said the former speaker; "but for the scantling of truth which is necessary after all, Lord help us! —Geoffrey of Monmouth will be Lord Clarendon to him."

As the confusion began to abate, more than one member of the meeting was seen to touch his forehead significantly, while Captain Clutterbuck humm'd,

Be by your friends advised,
Too rash, too hasty, dad,
Maugre your bolts and wise head,
The world will think you mad.

"The world, and you, gentlemen, may think what you please," said the Chairman, elevating his voice; "but I intend to write the most wonderful book which the world ever read—a book in which every incident shall be incredible, yet strictly true—

a work recalling recollections with which the ears of this generation once tingled, and which shall be read by our children with an admiration approaching to incredulity. Such shall be the LIFE of NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, by the AUTHOR of WAVERLEY!"

In the general start and exclamation which followed this annunciation, Mr Oldbuck dropped his snuff-box; and the Scottish rappee, which dispersed itself in consequence, had effects upon the nasal organs of our reporter, ensconced as he was under the secretary's table, which occasioned his being discovered and extruded in the illiberal and unhandsome manner we have mentioned, with threats of farther damage to his nose, ears, and other parts of his body, on the part especially of Captain Clutterbuck. Undismayed by these threats,

which indeed those of his profession are accustomed to hold at defiance, our young man hovered about the door of the tavern, but could only bring us the further intelligence, that the meeting had broken up in about a quarter of an hour after his expulsion, "in much-admired disorder."

TALES OF THE CRUSADERS.

TALE I.

The Betrothed.

TALES OF THE CRUSADERS.

TALE I.

The Betrothed.

CHAPTER I.

Now in these dayes were hotte wars upon the Marches of Wales.
LEWIS'S *History*.

THE Chronicles, from which this narrative is extracted, assure us, that, during the long period when the Welch princes maintained their independence, the year 1187 was peculiarly marked as favourable to peace betwixt them and their warlike neighbours, the Lords Marchers, who inhabited those formidable castles on the frontiers of the ancient British, on the ruins of which the travel-

ler gazes with wonder. This was the time when Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, accompanied by the learned Giraldus de Barri, afterwards Bishop of Saint David's, preached the Crusade from castle to castle, from town to town; awakened the inmost valleys of his native Cambria with the call to arms for recovery of the Holy Sepulchre; and, while he deprecated the feuds and wars of Christian men against each other, held out to the martial spirit of the age a general object of ambition, and a scene of adventure, where the favour of Heaven, as well as earthly renown, was to reward the successful champions.

Yet the British chieftains, among the thousands whom this spirit-stirring summons called from their native land to a distant and perilous expedition, had perhaps the best excuse for declining the summons. The superior skill of the Anglo-Norman knights, who were engaged in constant inroads on the Welch frontier, and who were frequently detaching from it large portions, which they fortified with castles, thus making good what they had won, was avenged, indeed, but not compensated, by the furious inroads of the British,

who, like the billows of a retiring tide, rolled on successively, with noise, fury, and devastation; but, on each retreat, yielded ground insensibly to their invaders.

A union among the native princes might have opposed a strong barrier to the encroachments of the strangers; but they were, unhappily, as much at discord among themselves as they were with the Normans, and were constantly engaged in private war with each other, of which the common enemy had the sole advantage.

The invitation to the Crusade promised something at least of novelty to a nation peculiarly ardent in their temper; and it was accepted by many, regardless of the consequence which must ensue to the country which they left defenceless. Even the most celebrated enemies of the Saxon and Norman race laid aside their enmity against the invaders of their country, to enroll themselves under the banners of the Crusade.

Amongst these was reckoned Gwenwyn, (or more properly Gwenwynwen, though we retain the briefer appellative,) who continued to exercise a precarious sovereignty over such parts of Powys-Land as had not been subjugated by the Mortimers,

Guarines, Latimers, FitzAlans, and other Norman nobles, who, under various pretexts, and sometimes contemning all others than the open avowal of superior force, had severed and appropriated large portions of that once extensive and independent principality, which, when Wales was unhappily divided into three parts on the death of Roderick Mawr, fell to the lot of his youngest son Mervyn. The undaunted resolution and stubborn ferocity of Gwenwyn, descendant of that prince, had long made him beloved among the "Tall men," or Champions of Wales; and he was enabled, more by the number of soldiers who served under him, attracted by his reputation, than by the natural strength of his dilapidated principality, to retaliate the encroachments of the English by the most wasteful inroads.

Yet even Gwenwyn on the present occasion seemed to forget his deeply sworn hatred against his dangerous neighbours. The Torch of Pengwern, (for so Gwenwyn was called, from his frequently laying the province of Shrewsbury in conflagration,) seemed at present to burn as calmly as a taper in the bower of a lady; and the Wolf of Plinlimmon, another name with which the bards had

graced Gwenwyn, now slumbered as peacefully as the shepherd's dog on the domestic hearth.

But it was not alone the eloquence of Baldwin or of Gerald which had lulled into peace a spirit so restless and fierce. It is true, their exhortations had done more towards it than Gwenwyn's followers had thought possible. The Archbishop had induced the British Chief to break bread, and to mingle in sylvan sports, with his nearest, and hitherto one of his most determined enemies, the old Norman warrior Sir Raymond Berenger, who, sometimes beaten, sometimes victorious, but never subdued, had, in spite of Gwenwyn's hottest incursions, maintained his Castle of Garde Doloureuse, upon the marches of Wales; a place strong by nature and well fortified by art, which the Welch prince had found it impossible to conquer, either by open force or by stratagem, and which, remaining with a strong garrison in his rear, often checked his incursions, by rendering his retreat precarious.

On this account, Gwenwyn of Powys-Land had an hundred times vowed the death of Raymond Berenger, and the demolition of his castle; but the policy of the sagacious old warrior, and his per-

fect experience with all warlike practice, were such as, with the aid of his more powerful countrymen, enabled him to defy the attempts of his fiery neighbour. If there was a man, therefore, throughout England, whom Gwenwyn hated more than another, it was Raymond Berenger; and yet the good Archbishop Baldwin could prevail on the Welch prince to meet him as a friend and ally in the cause of the Cross. He even invited Raymond to the autumn hospitality of his Welch palace, where the old knight, in all honourable courtesy, feasted and hunted for more than a week in the dominions of his hereditary foe.

To requite this hospitality, Raymond invited the Prince of Powys, with a chosen but limited train, during the ensuing Christmas, to the Garde Doloureuse, which some antiquarians have endeavoured to identify with the Castle of Colune, on the river of the same name. But the length of time, and some geographical difficulties, throw doubts upon this ingenious conjecture.

As the Welchman crossed the draw-bridge, he was observed by his faithful bard to shudder with involuntary emotion; nor did Cadwallon, experienced as he was in life, and well acquainted with

the character of his master, make any doubt that he was at that moment strongly urged by the apparent opportunity, to seize upon the strength which had been so long the object of his cupidity, even at the expense of violating his good faith.

Dreading lest the struggle of his master's conscience and his ambition should terminate unfavourably for his fame, the bard arrested his attention by whispering in their native language, that "the teeth which bite hardest are those which are out of sight;" and Gwenwyn looking around him, became aware that, though only unarmed squires and pages appeared in the court-yard, yet the towers and battlements connecting them were garnished with archers and men-at-arms.

They proceeded to the banquet, at which Gwenwyn, for the first time, beheld Eveline Berenger, the sole child of the Norman castellane, the inheritor of his domains and of his supposed wealth, aged only sixteen, and the most beautiful damsel upon the Welch marches. Many a spear had already been shivered in maintenance of her charms; and the gallant Hugo de Lacy, Constable of Chester, one of the most redoubted war-

riors of the time, had laid at Eveline's feet the prize which his chivalry had gained in a great tournament held near that ancient town. Gwenwyn considered these triumphs as so many additional recommendations to Eveline; her beauty was incontestible, and she was heiress of the fortress which he so much longed to possess, and which he began now to think might be acquired by means more smooth than those with which he was in the use of working out his will.

Again, the hatred which subsisted between the British and their Saxon and Norman invaders; his long and ill-extinguished feud with this very Raymond Berenger; a general recollection that alliances between the Welch and English had rarely been happy; and a consciousness that the measure which he meditated would be unpopular among his followers, and appear a dereliction of the systematic principles on which he had hitherto acted, refrained him from speaking his wishes to Raymond or his daughter. No idea of rejection of his suit for a moment occurred to him; he was convinced he had but to speak his wishes, and that the daughter of a Norman castellane, whose

rank or power were not of the highest order among the nobles of the frontiers, must be delighted and honoured by a proposal from the sovereign of a hundred mountains.

There was indeed another objection, which in later times would have been of considerable weight —Gwenwyn was already married. But Brengwain was a childless bride; sovereigns, (and among sovereigns the Welch prince ranked himself,) marry for lineage, and the Pope was not like to be scrupulous, where the question was to oblige a prince who had assumed the Cross with such ready zeal, even although, in fact, his thoughts had been much more upon Garde Doloureuse than upon Jerusalem. In the meanwhile, if Raymond Berenger was not liberal enough to permit Eveline to hold the temporary rank of concubine, which the manners of Wales warranted Gwenwyn to offer as an interim arrangement, he had only to wait for a few months, and sue for a divorce through the Bishop of Saint David's, or some other intercessor at the Court of Rome.

Agitating these thoughts in his mind, Gwenwyn prolonged his residence at the Castle of Berenger,

from Christmas till Twelfth-day; and endured the presence of the Norman cavaliers who resorted to Raymond's festal halls, although, regarding themselves, in virtue of their rank of knighthood, equal to the most potent sovereigns, they made small account of the long descent of the Welch prince, who, in their eyes, was but the chief of a semi-barbarous province; while he, on his part, considered them little better than a sort of privileged robbers, and with the utmost difficulty restrained himself from manifesting his open hatred, when he beheld them careering in the exercises of chivalry, the habitual use of which rendered them such formidable enemies to his country. At length, the term of feasting was ended, and knight and squire departed from the castle, which once more assumed the aspect of a solitary and guarded frontier fort.

But the Prince of Powys-Land, while pursuing his sports on his own mountains and vallies, found that even the superior plenty of the game, as well as his release from the society of the Norman chivalry, who affected to treat him as an equal, profited him nothing, so long as the light and beauti-

ful form of Eveline, on her white palfrey, was banished from the train of sportsmen. In short, he hesitated no longer, but took into his confidence his chaplain, an able and sagacious man, whose pride was flattered by his patron's communication, and who, besides, saw in the proposed scheme some contingent advantages for himself and his order. By his counsel, the proceedings for Gwenwyn's divorce were prosecuted under favourable auspices, and the unfortunate Brengwain was removed to a nunnery, which perhaps she found a more cheerful habitation than the lonely retreat in which she had led a neglected life, ever since Gwenwyn had despaired of her bed being blessed with issue. Father Hugo also dealt with the chiefs and elders of the land, and represented to them the advantage which in future wars they were certain to obtain by possession of the Garde Doloureuse, which had for more than a century covered and protected a considerable tract of country, rendered their advance difficult, and their retreat perilous, and, in a word, prevented their carrying their incursions as far as the gates of Shrewsbury. As for the union with the Saxon damsel, the fetters which it was to form might not

(the good father hinted,) be found more permanent than those which had bound Gwenwyn to her predecessor, Brengwain.

These arguments, mingled with others adapted to the views and wishes of different individuals, were so prevailing, that the chaplain in the course of a few weeks was able to report to his princely patron, that his proposed match would meet with no opposition from the elders and nobles of his dominions. A golden bracelet, six ounces in weight, was the instant reward of the priest's dexterity in negotiation, and he was appointed by Gwenwyn to commit to paper those proposals, which he doubted not were to throw the Castle of Garde Doloureuse, notwithstanding its melancholy name, into an ecstacy of joy. With some difficulty the chaplain prevailed on his patron to say nothing in this letter upon his temporary plan of concubinage, which he wisely judged might be considered as an affront both by Eveline and her father. The matter of the divorce he represented as almost entirely settled, and wound up his letter with a moral application, in which were many allusions to Vashti, Esther, and Ahasuerus.

Having dispatched this letter by a swift and trusty messenger, the British prince opened in all solemnity the feast of Easter, which had come round during the course of these *external* and *internal* negotiations.

Upon the approaching Holy-tide, to propitiate the minds of his subjects and vassals, they were invited in large numbers to partake a princely festivity at Castell-Coch or the Red Castle, as it was then called, since better known by the name of Powys-Castle, and afterwards the princely seat of the Duke of Beaufort. The architectural magnificence of this noble residence was of a much later period than that of Gwenwyn, whose palace, at the period we speak of, was a long, low-roofed edifice of red stone, whence the castle derived its name; while a ditch and palisade were, in addition to the commanding situation, its most important defences.

CHAPTER II.

At Madoc's tent the clarion sounds,
With rapid clangor hurried far;
Each hill and dale the note rebounds,
But when return the sons of war!
Thou, born of stern Necessity,
Dull Peace! the valley yields to thee,
And owns thy melancholy sway.
Welch Poem.

The feasts of the ancient British princes usually exhibited all the rude splendour and liberal indulgence of mountain hospitality, and Gwenwyn was, on the present occasion, anxious to purchase popularity by even an unusual display of profusion; for he was sensible that the alliance which he meditated might indeed be tolerated, but could not be approved, by his subjects and followers.

The following incident, trifling in itself, confirmed his apprehensions. Passing one evening,

when it was become nearly dark, by the open window of a guard-room, usually occupied by some few of his most celebrated soldiers, who relieved each other in watching his palace, he heard Morgan, a man distinguished for strength, courage, and ferocity, say to the companion with whom he was sitting by the watch-fire, "Gwenwyn is turned to a priest, or a woman! When was it before these last months, that a follower of his was obliged to gnaw the meat from the bone so closely, as I am now peeling the morsel which I hold in my hand?"

"Wait but a while," replied his comrade, "till the Norman match be accomplished; and so small will be the prey we shall then drive from the Saxon churls, that we may be glad to swallow, like hungry dogs, the very bones themselves."

Gwenwyn heard no more of their conversation; but this was enough to alarm his pride as a soldier, and his jealousy as a prince. He was sensible, that the people over whom he ruled were at once fickle in their disposition, impatient of long repose, and full of hatred against their neighbours; and he almost dreaded the consequences of the inactivity to which a long truce might reduce

them. The risk was now incurred, however; and to display even more than his wonted splendour and liberality, seemed the best way of reconciling the wavering affections of his subjects.

A Norman would have despised the barbarous magnificence of an entertainment, consisting of kine and sheep roasted whole, of goats' flesh and deers' flesh seethed in the skins of the animals themselves; for the Normans piqued themselves on the quality rather than the quantity of their food, and, eating rather delicately than largely, ridiculed the coarser taste of the Britons, although the last were in their banquets much more moderate than were the Saxons; nor would the oceans of *Crw* and hydromel, which overwhelmed the guests like a deluge, have made up, in their opinion, for the absence of the more elegant and costly beverage which they had learned to love in the south of Europe. Milk, prepared in various ways, was another material of the entertainment, which would not have received their approbation, although a nutriment which, on ordinary occasions, often supplied the want of all others among the ancient British, whose country was rich in

flocks and herds, but poor in agricultural produce.

The banquet was spread in a long low hall, built of rough wood lined with shingles, having a fire at each end, the smoke of which, unable to find its way through the imperfect vents in the roof, rolled in cloudy billows above the heads of the revellers, who sat on low seats, purposely to avoid its stifling fumes. The mien and appearance of the company assembled was wild, and, even in their social hours, almost terrific. Their prince himself had the gigantic port and fiery eye fitted to sway an unruly people, whose delight was in the field of battle; and the long moustaches which he and most of his champions wore, added to the formidable dignity of his presence. Like most of those present, Gwenwyn was clad in a simple tunic of white linen cloth, a remnant of the dress which the Romans had introduced into provincial Britain; and he was distinguished by the Eudorchawg, or chain of twisted gold links, with which the Celtic tribes always decorated their chiefs. The collar, indeed, was common to chieftains of inferior rank, many of whom bore it in virtue of

their birth, or had won it by military exploits; but a ring of gold, bent around the head, intermingled with Gwenwyn's hair—for he still claimed the rank of one of three diademed princes, and his armlets and anklets, of the same metal, were peculiar to the Prince of Powys, as an independent sovereign. Two squires of his body, who dedicated their whole attention to his service, stood at the Prince's back; and at his feet sat a page, whose duty it was to keep them warm by chafing and by wrapping them in his mantle. The same right of sovereignty, which assigned to Gwenwyn his golden crownlet, gave him title to the attendance of the foot-bearer, or youth, who lay on the rushes, and whose duty it was to cherish the Prince's feet in his lap or bosom.

Notwithstanding the military disposition of the guests, and the risk arising from the feuds into which they were divided, few of the feasters wore any defensive armour, excepting the light goat-skin buckler, which hung behind each man's seat. On the other hand, they were well provided with stores of offensive weapons; for the broad, sharp, short two-edged sword was another legacy of the

Romans. Most added a wood-knife or poniard; and there were store of javelins, darts, bows and arrows, pikes, halberds, Danish axes, and Welch hooks and bills; so, in case of ill-blood arising during the banquet, there was no lack of weapons to work mischief.

But although the form of the feast was somewhat disorderly, and that the revellers were unrestrained by the stricter rules of good breeding which the laws of chivalry imposed, the Easter banquet of Gwenwyn possessed, in the attendance of twelve eminent bards, one source of the most exalted pleasure, in a much higher degree than the proud Normans could themselves boast. The latter, it is true, had their minstrels, a race of men trained to the profession of poetry, song, and music; but although those arts were highly honoured, and the individual professors, when they attained to eminence, were often richly rewarded, the order of minstrels, as such, was held in low esteem, being composed chiefly of worthless and dissolute strollers, by whom the art was assumed, in order to escape from the necessity of labour, and to have the means of pursuing a wandering and dis-

sipated course of life. Such, in all times, has been the censure upon the calling of those who dedicate themselves to the public amusement; among whom those distinguished by individual excellence are sometimes raised high in the social circle, while far the more numerous professors are sunk into the lower scale. But such was not the case with the order of the bards in Wales, who, succeeding to the dignity of the druids, under whom they had originally formed a subordinate fraternity, had many immunities, were held in the highest reverence and esteem, and exercised much influence with their countrymen. Their power over the public mind even rivalled that of the priests themselves, to whom indeed they bore some resemblance; for they never wore arms, were initiated into their order by secret and mystic solemnities, and homage was rendered to their *Awen*, or flow of poetic inspiration, as if it had been indeed marked with a divine character. Thus possessed of power and consequence, the bards were not unwilling to exercise their privileges, and sometimes, in doing so, their manners rather savoured of caprice.

This was perhaps the case with Cadwallon, the chief bard of Gwenwyn, and who, as such, was expected to have poured forth the tide of song in the banquetting-hall of his prince. But neither the anxious and breathless expectation of the assembled chiefs and champions—neither the dead silence which stilled the roaring hall, when his harp was reverently placed before him by his attendant—nor even the commands or entreaties of the Prince himself—could extract from Cadwallon more than a short and interrupted prelude upon the instrument, the notes of which arranged themselves into an air inexpressibly mournful, and died away in silence. The Prince frowned darkly on the bard, who was himself far too deeply lost in gloomy thought, to offer any apology, or even to observe his displeasure. Again he touched a few wild notes, and, raising his looks upward, seemed to be on the very point of bursting forth into a tide of song similar to those with which this master of his art was wont to enchant his hearers. But the effort was in vain—he declared that his right hand was withered, and pushed the instrument from him.

A murmur went round the company, and Gwenwyn read in their aspects that they received the unusual silence of Cadwallon on this high occasion as a bad omen. He called hastily on a young and ambitious bard, named Caradoc of Menwygent, whose rising fame was likely soon to vie with the established reputation of Cadwallon, and summoned him to sing something which might command the applause of his sovereign and the gratitude of the company. The young man was ambitious, and understood the arts of a courtier. He commenced a poem, in which, although under a feigned name, he drew such a poetic picture of Eveline Berenger, that Gwenwyn was enraptured; and while all who had seen the beautiful original at once recognized the resemblance, the eyes of the Prince confessed at once his passion for the subject, and his admiration of the poet. The figures of Celtic poetry, in themselves highly imaginative, were scarce sufficient for the enthusiasm of the ambitious bard, rising in his tone as he perceived the feelings which he was exciting. The praises of the Prince mingled with those of the Norman beauty; and "as a lion," said the poet, "can

only be led by the hand of a chaste and beautiful maiden, so a chief can only acknowledge the empire of the most virtuous, the most lovely of her sex. Who asks of the noon-day sun, in what quarter of the world he was born? and who shall ask of such charms as hers, to what country they owe their birth?"

Enthusiasts in pleasure as in war, and possessed of imaginations which answered readily to the summons of their poets, the Welch chiefs and leaders united in acclamations of applause; and the song of the bard went farther to render popular the intended alliance of the Prince, than had all the graver arguments of his priestly intercessor.

Gwenwyn himself, in a transport of delight, tore off the golden bracelets which he wore, to bestow them upon a bard whose song had produced an effect so desirable; and said, as he looked at the silent and sullen Cadwallon, "The silent harp was never strung with golden wires."

"Prince," answered the bard, whose pride was at least equal to that of Gwenwyn himself, "you pervert the proverb of Taliessin—it is the flattering harp, which never lacked golden strings."

Gwenwyn, turning sternly towards him, was about to make an angry answer, when the sudden appearance of Jorworth, the messenger whom he had dispatched to Raymond Berenger, arrested his purpose. This rude envoy entered the hall bare-legged, excepting the sandals of goat-skin which he wore, and having on his shoulder a cloak of the same, and a short javelin in his hand. The dust on his garments, and the flush on his brow, shewed with what hasty zeal his errand had been executed. Gwenwyn demanded of him eagerly, "What news from Garde Doloureuse, Jorworth ap Jevan?"

"I bear them in my bosom," said the son of Jevan; and, with much reverence, he delivered to the Prince a packet, bound with silk, and sealed with the impression of a swan, the ancient cognisance of the House of Berenger. Himself ignorant of writing or reading, Gwenwyn, in anxious haste, delivered the letter to Cadwallon, who usually acted as secretary when the chaplain was not in presence, as chanced then to be the case. Cadwallon, looking at the letter, said briefly, "I read no Latin. Ill betide the Norman, who writes to a

Prince of Powys in other language than that of Britain! and well was the hour, when that alone was spoken from Tintadgel to Cairleoil."

Gwenwyn only replied to him with an angry glance.

"Where is Father Hugo?" said the impatient prince.

"He assists in the church," replied one of his attendants, "for it is the feast of Saint——"

"Were it the feast of Saint David," said Gwenwyn, "and were the pyx between his hands, he must come hither to me instantly!"

One of the chief henchmen sprang off, to command his attendance, and, in the meantime, Gwenwyn eyed the letter containing the secret of his fate, but which it required an interpreter to read, with such eagerness and anxiety, that Caradoc, elated by his former success, threw in a few notes to divert, if possible, the tenor of his patron's thoughts during the interval. A light and lively air, touched by a hand which seemed to hesitate, like the submissive voice of an inferior, fearing to interrupt his master's meditations, introduced a stanza or two applicable to the subject."

"And what though thou, O scroll," he said, apostrophizing the letter, which lay on the table before his master, "doest speak with the tongue of the stranger? Hath not the cuckow a harsh note, and yet she tells us of green buds and springing flowers? What if thy language be that of the stoled priest, is it not the same which binds hearts and hands together at the altar? And what though thou delayest to render up thy treasures, are not all pleasures most sweet, when enhanced by expectation? What were the chace, if the deer dropped at our feet the instant he started from the cover—or what value were there in the love of the maiden, were it yielded without coy delay?"

The song of the bard was here broken short by the entrance of the priest, who, hasty in obeying the summons of his impatient master, had not tarried to lay aside even the stole, which he had worn in the holy service; and many of the elders thought it was no good omen, that, so habited, a priest should appear in a festive assembly, and amid profane minstrelsy.

The priest opened the letter of the Norman

Baron, and, struck with surprise at the contents, lifted his eyes in silence.

"Read it!" exclaimed the fierce Gwenwyn.

"So please you," replied the more prudent chaplain, "a smaller company were a fitter audience."

"Read it aloud!" repeated the Prince, in a still higher tone; "there sit none here who respect not the honour of their prince, or who deserve not his confidence. Read it, I say, aloud! and by Saint David, if Raymond the Norman hath dared——"

He stopped short, and, reclining on his seat, composed himself to an attitude of attention; but it was easy for his followers to fill up the breach in his exclamation which prudence had recommended.

The voice of the Chaplain was low and ill-assured as he read the following epistle:—

"Raymond Berenger, the noble Norman Knight, Seneschal of the Garde Doloureuse, to Gwenwyn, Prince of Powys, (May peace be between them!) sendeth health.

"Your letter, craving the hand of our daughter Eveline Berenger, was safely delivered to us by your servant, Jorworth ap Jevan, and we thank you heartily for the good meaning therein expressed to us and to ours. But, considering within ourselves the difference of blood and lineage, with the impediments and causes of offence which have often arisen in the like cases, we hold it fitter to match our daughter within her own people; and this by no case in disparagement of you, but solely for the weal of you, of ourselves, and of our mutual dependants, who will be the more safe from the risk of quarrel betwixt us, that we essay not to draw the bonds of our intimacy more close than beseemeth. The sheep and the goats feed together in peace on the same pastures, but they mingle not in blood, or race, the one with the other. Moreover, our daughter Eveline hath been sought in marriage by a noble and potent Lord of the Marches, Hugo de Lacy, the Constable of Chester, to which most honourable suit we have returned a favourable answer. It is therefore impossible that we should in this matter grant to you the

boon you seek; nevertheless, you shall at all times find us, in other matters, willing to pleasure you; and hereunto we call God, and Our Lady, and Saint Mary Magdalene of Quatford, to witness; to whose keeping we heartily recommend you.

"Written by our command, at our Castle of Garde Doloureuse, within the Marches of Wales, by a reverend priest, Father Aldrovand, a black monk of the house of Wenlock; and to which we have appended our seal, upon the eve of the blessed martyr Saint Alphegius, to whom be honour and glory."

The voice of Father Hugo faltered, and the scroll which he held in his hand trembled in his grasp, as he arrived at the conclusion of this epistle; for well he knew that insults more slight than Gwenwyn would hold the slightest word it contained, were sure to put every drop of his British blood into the most vehement commotion. Nor did it fail to do so. The Prince had gradually drawn himself up from the posture of repose in which he had prepared to listen to the epistle; and when it concluded, he sprung on his

feet like a startled lion, spurning from him as he rose the foot-bearer, who rolled at some distance on the floor. "Priest," he said, "hast thou read that accursed scroll fairly? for if thou hast added, or diminished, one word, or one letter, I will have thine eyes so handled, that thou shalt never read letter more!"

The monk replied, trembling, (for he was well aware that the sacerdotal character was not uniformly respected among the irascible Welchmen,) "By the oath of my order, mighty prince, I have read word for word, and letter for letter."

There was a momentary pause, while the fury of Gwenwyn, at this unexpected affront, offered to him in the presence of all his Uckelwyr, (*i. e.* noble chiefs, literally men of high stature,) seemed too big for utterance, when the silence was broken by a few notes from the hitherto mute harp of Cadwallon. The Prince looked round at first with displeasure at the interruption, for he was himself about to speak; but when he beheld the bard bending over his harp with an air of inspiration, and blending together, with unexampled skill, the wildest and most exalted tones of his art,

he himself became an auditor instead of a speaker, and Cadwallon, not the Prince, seemed to become the central point of the assembly, on whom all eyes were bent, and to whom each ear was turned with breathless eagerness, as if his strains were the responses of an oracle.

"We wed not with the stranger,"—thus burst the song from the lips of the poet. "Vortigern wedded with the stranger; thence came the first woe upon Britain, and a sword upon her nobles, and a thunderbolt upon her palace. We wed not with the enslaved Saxon—the free and princely stag seeks not for his bride the heifer whose neck the yoke hath worn. We wed not with the rapacious Norman—the noble hound scorns to seek a mate from the herd of ravening wolves. When was it heard that the Cymry, the descendants of Brute, the true children of the soil of fair Britain, were plundered, oppressed, bereft of their birth-right, and insulted even in their last retreats?—when, but since they stretched their hand in friendship to the stranger, and clasped to their bosoms the daughter of the Saxon? Which of the two is feared?—the empty water-course of summer, or the

channel of the headlong winter torrent?—A maiden smiles at the summer-shrunk brook while she crosses it, but a barbed horse and his rider will fear to stem the wintry flood. Men of Mathraval and Powys, be the dreaded flood of winter Gwenwyn, son of Cyverliock!—may thy plume be the foremost of its waves!"

All thoughts of peace, thoughts which, in themselves, were foreign to the hearts of the warlike British, passed before the song of Cadwallon like dust before the whirlwind, and the unanimous shout of the assembly declared for instant war. The Prince himself spoke not, but, looking proudly around him, flung abroad his arm, as one who cheers his followers to the attack.

The priest, had he dared, might have reminded Gwenwyn, that the Cross which he had assumed on his shoulder, had consecrated his arm to the Holy War, and precluded his engaging in any civil strife. But the task was too dangerous for Father Hugo's courage, and he shrunk from the hall to the seclusion of his own convent. Caradoc, whose brief hour of popularity was past, also retired, with humbled and dejected looks, and

not without a glance of indignation at his triumphant rival, who had so judiciously reserved his display of art for the theme of war, that was ever most popular with the audience.

The chiefs resumed their seats no longer for the purpose of festivity, but to arrange in the hasty manner customary among these prompt warriors the point on which they were to assemble their forces, which, upon such occasions, comprehended almost all the able-bodied males of the country,—for all, excepting the priests and the bards, were soldiers,—and to settle the order of their descent upon the devoted marches, where they proposed to signalize, by general ravage, their sense of the insult which their prince had received, by the rejection of his suit.

CHAPTER III.

The sands are number'd, that make up my life;
Here must I stay, and here my life must end.
Henry VI. Act I. Scene IV.

When Raymond Berenger had dispatched his mission to the Prince of Powys, he was not unsuspicious, though altogether fearless, of the result. He sent messengers to the several dependants who held their fiefs by the tenure of *cornage*, and warned them to be on the alert, that he might receive instant notice of the approach of the enemy. These vassals, as is well known, occupied the numerous towers, which, like so many falcon-nests, had been built on the points most convenient to defend the frontiers, and were bound to give signal of any incursion of the Welch, by blowing their horns; which sounds, answered from tower to tower, and from station to station, gave the alarm for general defence. But although Ray-

mond considered these precautions as necessary, from the fickle and precarious temper of his neighbours, and for maintaining his own credit as a soldier, he was far from believing the danger to be imminent; for the preparations of the Welch, though on a much more extensive scale than had lately been usual, were as secret, as their resolution of war had been suddenly adopted.

It was upon the second morning after the memorable festival of Castell-Coch, that the tempest broke on the Norman frontier. At first a single, long, and keen bugle-blast, announced the approach of the enemy; presently the signals of alarm were echoed from every castle and tower on the borders of Shropshire, where every place of habitation was then a fortress. Beacons were lighted upon crags and eminences, the bells were rung backward in the churches and towns, while the general and earnest summons to arms announced an extremity of danger which even the inhabitants of that unsettled country had not hitherto experienced.

Amid this general alarm, Raymond Berenger, having busied himself in arranging his few but

gallant followers and adherents, and taken such modes of procuring intelligence of the enemy's strength and motions as were in his power, at length ascended the watch-tower of the castle, to observe in person the country around, already obscured in several places by the clouds of smoke, which announced the progress and the ravages of the invaders. He was speedily joined by his favourite squire, to whom the unusual heaviness of his master's looks was cause of much surprise, for till now they had ever been blithest at the hour of battle. The squire held in his hand his master's helmet, for Sir Raymond was all armed, saving the head.

"Dennis Morolt," said the veteran soldier, "are our vassals and liegemen all mustered?"

"All, noble sir, but the Flemings, who are not yet come in."

"The lazy hounds, why tarry they?" said Raymond. "Ill policy it is to plant such sluggish natures in our borders. They are like their own steers, fitter to tug a plough than for aught that requires mettle."

"With your favour," said Dennis, "the knaves

can do good service notwithstanding. That Wilkin Flammock of the Green can strike like the hammers of his own fulling-mill."

"He will fight, I believe, when he cannot help it," said Raymond; "but he has no stomach for such exercise, and is as slow and as stubborn as a mule."

"And therefore are his countrymen rightly matched against the Welch," replied Dennis Morolt, "that their solid and unyielding temper may be a fit foil to the fiery and headlong dispositions of our dangerous neighbours, just as restless waves are best opposed by steadfast rocks.—Hark, sir, I hear Wilkin Flammock's step ascending the turret-stair, as deliberately as ever monk mounted to matins."

Step by step the heavy sound approached, until the form of the huge and substantial Fleming at length issued from the turret-door to the platform where they were conversing. Wilkin Flammock was armed in bright armour, cleaned with an exceeding care, which marked the neatness of his nation, and of unusual weight and thickness; but, contrary to the custom of the Normans, en-

tirely plain, and void of carving, gilding, or any sort of ornament. The bacinet, or steel cap, had no visor, and left exposed a broad countenance, with heavy and unpliable features, which announced the character of his temper and understanding. He carried in his hand a heavy mace.

"So, Sir Fleming," said the Castellane, "you are in no hurry, methinks, to repair to the rendezvous."

"So please you," answered the Fleming, "we were compelled to tarry, that we might load our wains with our bales of cloth and other property."

"Ha! wains?—how many wains have you brought with you?"

"Six, noble sir," replied Wilkin.

"And how many men?" demanded Raymond Berenger.

"Twelve, valiant sir," answered Flammock.

"Only two men to each baggage-wain? I wonder you would thus encumber yourself," said Berenger.

"Under your favour, sir, once more," replied Wilkin, "it is only the value which I and my comrades set upon our goods, that inclines us to

defend them with our bodies; and, had we been obliged to leave our cloth to the plundering clutches of yonder vagabonds, I should have seen small policy in stopping here to give them the opportunity of adding murder to robbery. Gloucester should have been my first halting-place."

The Norman knight gazed on the Flemish artizan, for such was Wilkin Flammock, with such a mixture of surprise and contempt, as excluded indignation. "I have heard much," he said, "but this is the first time that I have heard one with a beard on his lip avouch himself a coward."

"Nor do you hear it now," answered Flammock, with the utmost composure—"I am always ready to fight for life and property; and my coming to this country, where they are both in constant danger, shews that I care not much how often I do so. But a sound skin is better than a slashed one, for all that."

"Well," said Raymond Berenger, "fight after thine own fashion, so thou wilt but fight stoutly with that long body of thine. We are like to have need for all that we can do.—Saw you aught of

these rascaille Welch?—have they Gwenwyn's banner amongst them?"

"I saw it with the white dragon displayed," replied Wilkin; "I could not but know it, since it was broidered in my own loom."

Raymond looked so grave upon this intelligence, that Dennis Morolt, unwilling the Fleming should mark it, thought it necessary to withdraw his attention. "I can tell thee," he said to Flammock, "that when the Constable of Chester joins us with his lances, you shall see your handy-work, the dragon, fly faster homeward than ever flew the shuttle which wove it."

"It must fly before the Constable comes up, Dennis Morolt," said Berenger, "else it will fly triumphant over all our dead bodies."

"In the name of God and the Holy Virgin!" said Dennis, "what may you mean, Sir Knight?—not that we should fight with the Welch before the Constable joins us?"—He paused, and then, well understanding the firm, yet melancholy glance, with which his master answered the question, he proceeded, with yet more vehement earnestness—"You cannot mean it—you cannot in-

tend that we shall quit this castle, which we have so often made good against them, and contend in the field with two hundred men against thousands?—Think better of it, my beloved master, and let not the rashness of your old age blemish that character for wisdom and warlike skill, which your former life has so nobly won."

"I am not angry with you for blaming my purpose, Dennis," answered the Norman, "for I know you do it in love to me and mine. But, Dennis Morolt, this thing must be—we must fight the Welchman within these three hours, or the name of Raymond Berenger must be blotted from the genealogy of his house."

"And so we will—we will fight them, my noble master," said the esquire; "fear not cold counsel from Dennis Morolt, where battle is the theme. But we will fight them under the walls of the castle, with honest Wilkin Flammock and his cross-bows on the wall to protect our flanks, and afford us some balance against the numerous odds."

"Not so, Dennis," answered his master—"in the open field we must fight them, or thy master

must rank but as a man-sworn knight. Know, that when I feasted yonder wily savage in my halls at Christmas, and when the wine was flowing fastest around, Gwenwyn threw out some praises of the fastness and strength of my castle, in a manner which intimated it was these advantages alone that had secured me in former wars from defeat and captivity. I spoke in answer, when I had far better been silent; for what availed my idle boast, but as a fetter to bind me to a deed next to madness? If, I said, a prince of the Cymry shall again come in hostile fashion before the Garde Doloureuse, let him pitch his standard down in yonder plain by the bridge, and, by the word of a good knight, and the faith of a Christian man, Raymond Berenger will meet him as willingly, be he many or be he few, as was ever Welchman met withal."

Dennis was struck speechless when he heard of a promise so rash, so fatal; but his was not the casuistry which could release his master from the fetters with which his unwary confidence had bound him. It was otherwise with Wilkin Flammock. He stared—he almost laughed, notwith-

standing the reverence due to the Castellane, and his own insensibility to risible emotions. "And is this all?" he said. "If your honour had pledged yourself to pay one hundred florins to a Jew or to a Lombard, no doubt you must have kept the day, or forfeited your pledge; but surely one day is as good as another to keep a promise for fighting, and that day is best in which the promiser is strongest. But indeed, after all, what signifies any promise over a wine-flaggon?"

"It signifies as much as a promise can do that is given elsewhere. The promiser," said Berenger, "escapes not the sin of a word-breaker, because he hath been a drunken braggart."

"For the sin," said Dennis, "sure I am, that rather than you should do such deed of dole, the Abbot of Glastonbury would absolve you for a florin."

"But what shall wipe out the shame!" demanded Berenger—"how shall I dare to shew myself again among press of knights, who have broken my word of battle pledged, for fear of a Welchman and his naked savages? No! Dennis

Morolt, speak on it no more. Be it for weal or woe, we fight them to-day, and upon yonder fair field."

"It may be," said Flammock, "that Gwenwyn may have forgotten the promise, and so fail to appear to claim it in the appointed space; for, as we heard, your wines of France flooded his Welch brains deeply."

"He again alluded to it on the morning after it was made," said the Castellane—"trust me, he will not forget what will give him such a chance of removing me from his path for ever."

As he spoke, they observed that large clouds of dust, which had been seen at different points of the landscape, were drawing down towards the opposite side of the river, over which an ancient bridge extended itself to the appointed place of combat. They were at no loss to conjecture the cause. It was evident that Gwenwyn, recalling the parties who had been engaged in partial devastation, was bending with his whole forces towards the bridge and the plain beyond it.

"Let us rush down and secure the pass," said

Dennis Morolt; "we may debate with them with some equality by the advantage of defending the bridge. Your word bound you to the plain as to a field of battle, but it did not oblige you to forego such advantages as the passage of the bridge would afford. Our men, our horses are ready—let our bowmen secure the banks, and my life on the issue."

"When I promised to meet him in yonder field, I meant," replied Raymond Berenger, "to give the Welchman the full advantage of equality of ground. I so meant it—he so understood it; and what avails keeping my word in the letter, if I break it in the sense? We move not till the last Welchman has crossed the bridge; and then——"

"And then," said Dennis, "we move to our death?—May God forgive our sins! But——"

"But what?" said Berenger; "something sticks in thy mind that should have vent."

"My young lady, your daughter, the Lady Eveline——"

"I have told her what is to be. She shall re-

main in the castle, where I will leave a few chosen veterans, with you, Dennis, to command them. In twenty-four hours the siege will be relieved, and we have defended it longer with a slighter garrison. Then to her aunt, the Abbess of the Benedictine sisters—thou, Dennis, wilt see her placed there in honour and safety, and my sister will care for her future provision as her wisdom shall determine."

"*I* leave you at this pinch!" said Dennis Morolt, bursting into tears—"*I* shut myself up within walls, when my master rides to his last of battles!—*I* become esquire to a lady, even though it be to the Lady Eveline, when he lies dead under his shield!—Raymond Berenger, is it for this that I have buckled thy armour so often?"

The tears gushed from the old warrior's eyes as fast as from those of a girl who weeps for her lover; and Raymond, taking him kindly by the hand, said, in a soothing tone, "Do not think, my good old servant, that, were honour to be won, I would drive thee from my side. But this is a wild and an inconsiderate deed, to which my fate or my folly has bound me. I die to save my

name from dishonour; but, alas! I must leave on my memory the charge of imprudence."

"Let me share your imprudence, my dearest master," said Dennis Morolt, earnestly;—"the poor esquire has no business to be thought wiser than his master. In many a battle my valour derived some little fame from partaking in the deeds which won your renown—deny me not the right to share in that blame which your temerity may incur; let them not say, that so rash was his action, even his old esquire was not permitted to partake in it! I am part of yourself—it is murder to every man whom you take with you, if you leave me behind."

"Dennis," said Berenger, "you make me feel yet more bitterly the folly I have yielded to. I would grant you the boon you ask, sad as it is—But my daughter——"

"Sir Knight," said the Fleming, who had listened to this dialogue with somewhat less than his usual apathy, "it is not my purpose this day to leave this castle; now, if you could trust my troth to do what a plain man may for the protection of my Lady Eveline——"

"How, sirrah!" said Raymond; "you do not propose to leave the castle? Who gives you right to propose or dispose in the case, until my pleasure is known?"

"I shall be sorry to have words with you, Sir Castellane," said the imperturbable Fleming;—"but I hold here, in this township, certain mills, tenements, cloth-yards, and so forth, for which I am to pay man-service in defending this Castle of the Garde Doloureuse, and in this I am ready. But if you call on me to march from hence, leaving the same castle defenceless, and to offer up my life in a battle which you acknowledge to be desperate, I must needs say my tenure binds me not to obey thee."

"Base mechanic!" said Morolt, laying his hand on his dagger, and menacing the Fleming.

But Raymond Berenger interfered with voice and hand—"Harm him not, Morolt, and blame him not. He hath a sense of duty, though not after our manner; and he and his knaves will fight best behind stone walls. They are taught also, these Flemings, by the practice of their own country, the attack and defence of walled cities

6212

and fortresses, and are especially skilful in working of mangonels and military engines. There are several of his countrymen in the castle, besides his own followers. These I propose to leave behind; and I think they will obey him more readily than any but thyself—how think'st thou? Thou would'st not, I know, from a misconstrued point of honour, or a blind love to me, leave this important place, and the safety of Eveline, in doubtful hands?"

"Wilkin Flammock is but a Flemish clown, noble sir," answered Dennis, as much overjoyed as if he had obtained some important advantage; "but I must needs say he is as stout and true as any whom you might trust; and, besides, his own shrewdness will teach him there is more to be gained by defending such a castle as this, than by yielding it to strangers, who may not be likely to keep the terms of surrender, however fairly they may offer them."

"It is fixed then," said Raymond Berenger. "Then, Dennis, thou shalt go with me, and he shall remain behind.—Wilkin Flammock," he

said, addressing the Fleming solemnly, "I speak not to thee the language of chivalry, of which thou knowest nothing; but, as thou art an honest man, and a true Christian, I conjure thee to stand to the defence of this castle. Let no promise of the enemy draw thee to any base composition—no threat to any surrender. Relief must speedily arrive; if you fulfil your trust to me and to my daughter, Hugo de Lacy will reward you richly—if you fail, he will punish you severely."

"Sir Knight," said Flammock, "I am pleased you have put your trust so far in a plain handycraftman. For the Welch, I am come from a land for which we were compelled—yearly compelled—to struggle with the sea; and they who can deal with the waves in a tempest, need not fear an undisciplined people in their fury. Your daughter shall be as dear to me as mine own; and in that faith you may prick forth—if, indeed, you will not still, like a wiser man, shut gate, down portcullis, up draw-bridge, and let your archers and my cross-bows man the wall, and tell the knaves you are not the fool that they take you for."

"Good fellow, that must not be," said the Knight. "I hear my daughter's voice," he added hastily; "I would not again meet her, again to part from her. To Heaven's keeping I commit thee, honest Fleming—Follow me, Dennis Morolt."

The old castellane descended the stair of the southern tower hastily, just as his daughter Eveline ascended that of the eastern turret, to throw herself at his feet once more. She was followed by the Father Aldrovand, chaplain of her father; by an old and almost invalided huntsman, whose more active services in the field and the chase had been for some time chiefly limited to the superintendance of the Knight's kennels, and the charge especially of his more favourite hounds; and by Rose Flammock, the daughter of Wilkin, a blue-eyed Flemish maiden, round, plump, and shy as a partridge, who had been for some time permitted to keep company with the high-born Norman damsel, in a doubtful station, betwixt that of an humble friend and a superior domestic.

Eveline rushed upon the battlements, her hair dishevelled, and her eyes drowned in tears, and

eagerly demanded of the Fleming where her father was?

Flammock made a clumsy reverence, and attempted some answer; but his voice seemed to fail him. He turned his back upon Eveline without ceremony, and totally disregarding the anxious inquiries of the huntsman and the chaplain, he said hastily to his daughter, in his own language, "Mad work! mad work! look to the poor maiden, Rosichen—*Der alter Herr ist verruckt.*"*

Without further speech he descended the stairs, and never paused till he reached the buttery. Here he called like a lion for the controller of these regions, by the various names of Kammerer, Keller-master, and so forth, to which the old Reinold, an ancient Norman esquire, answered not, until the Netherlander fortunately recollected his English title of butler. This, his regular name of office, was the key to the buttery hatch, and the old man instantly appeared, with his grey cassock, and high rolled hose, a ponderous bunch of keys suspended by a silver chain to his broad

* The old lord is frantic.

leathern girdle, which, in consideration of the emergency of the time, he had thought it right to balance on the left side with a huge falchion, which seemed much too weighty for his old arm to wield.

"What is your will," he said, "Master Flammock? or what are your commands, since it is my lord's pleasure that they shall be laws to me for a time?"

"Only a cup of wine, good Meister Kellermaster—butler, I mean."

"I am glad you remember the name of mine office," said Reinold, with some of the petty resentment of a spoiled domestic, who thinks that a stranger has been irregularly put in command over him.

"A flagon of Rhenish, if you love me," answered the Fleming, "for my heart is low and poor within me, and I must needs drink of the best."

"And drink you shall," said Reinold, "if drink will give you the courage which perhaps you may want."—He descended to the secret crypts, of which he was the guardian, and return-

ed with a silver flagon, which might contain about a quart.—"Here is such wine," said Reinold, "as thou hast seldom tasted," and was about to pour it out into a cup.

"Nay, the flagon—the flagon, friend Reinold; I love a deep and solemn draught when the business is weighty," said Wilkin. He seized on the flagon accordingly, and drinking a preparatory mouthful, paused as if to estimate the strength and flavour of the generous liquor. Apparently he was pleased with both, for he nodded in approbation to the butler; and, raising the flagon to his mouth once more, he slowly and gradually brought the bottom of the vessel parallel with the roof of the apartment, without suffering one drop of the contents to escape him.

"That hath savour, Herr Kellermaster," said he, while he was recovering his breath by intervals, after so long a suspense of respiration; "but, may heaven forgive you for thinking it the best I have ever tasted! You little know the cellars of Ghent and of Ypres."

"And I care not for them," said Reinold; "those of gentle Norman blood, hold the wines

of Gascony and France, generous, light, and cordial, worth all the acid potations of the Rhine and the Neckar."

"All is matter of taste," said the Fleming; "but hark ye—Is there much of this wine in the cellar?"

"Methought, but now it pleased not your dainty palate," said Reinold.

"Nay, nay, my friend," said Wilkin, "I said it had savour—I may have drunk better—but this is right good, where better may not be had.—Again, how much of it hast thou?"

"The whole butt, man," answered the butler; "I have broached a fresh piece for you."

"Good," replied Flammock; "get the quart-pot of Christian measure; heave the cask up into this same buttery, and let each soldier of this castle be served with such a cup as I have here swallowed. I feel it hath done me much good—my heart was sinking when I saw the black smoke arising from mine own fulling-mills yonder. Let each man, I say, have a full quart-pot—men defend not castles on thin liquors."

"I must do as you will, good Wilkin Flam-

mock," said the butler; "but I pray remember all men are not alike. That which will but warm your Flemish hearts, will put wildfire into Norman brains; and what may only encourage your countrymen to man the walls, will make ours fly over the battlements."

"Well, you know the conditions of your own countrymen best; serve out to them what wines and measure you list—only let each Fleming have a solemn quart of Rhenish.—But what will you do for the English churls, of whom there are a right many left with us?"

The old butler paused, and rubbed his brow.—"There will be a strange waste of liquor," he said; "and yet I may not deny that the emergency may defend the expenditure. But for the English, they are, as you wot, a mixed breed, having much of your German sullenness, together with a plentiful touch of the hot blood of yonder Welch furies. Light wines stir them not; strong heavy draughts would madden them. What think you of ale, an invigorating, strengthening liquor, that warms the heart without inflaming the brain?"

"Ale!" said the Fleming.—"Hum—ha—is your ale mighty, Sir Butler?—is it double ale?"

"Do you doubt my skill?" said the butler.—"March and October have witnessed me ever as they came round, for thirty years, deal with the best barley in Shropshire.—You shall judge."

He filled, from a large hogshead in the corner of the buttery, the flagon which the Fleming had just emptied, and which was no sooner replenished than Wilkin again drained it to the bottom.

"Good ware," he said, "Master Butler, strong stinging ware. The English churls will fight like devils upon it—let them be furnished with mighty ale along with their beef and brown bread. And now, having given you your charge, Master Reinold, it is time I should look after mine own."

Wilkin Flammock left the buttery, and with a mien and judgment alike undisturbed by the deep potations in which he had so recently indulged, undisturbed also by the various rumours concerning what was passing without doors, he made the round of the castle and its out-works, mustered the little garrison, and assigned to each their posts, reserving to his own countrymen the management of the arblasts, or cross-bows, and of

the military engines which were contrived by the proud Normans, and were incomprehensible to the ignorant English, or, more properly, Anglo-Saxons, of the period, but which his more adroit countrymen managed with great address. The jealousies entertained by both the Normans and English, at being placed under the temporary command of a Fleming, gradually yielded to the military and mechanical skill which he displayed, as well as to a sense of the emergency, which became greater with every moment.

CHAPTER IV.

Beside yon brigg out ower yon burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a falling courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.
Prophecy of Thomas the Rymer.

The daughter of Raymond Berenger, with the attendants whom we have mentioned, continued to remain upon the battlements of the Garde Doloureuse, in spite of the exhortations of the priest that she would rather await the issue of this terrible interval in the chapel, and amid the rites of religion. He perceived, at length, that she was incapable, from grief and fear, of attending to, or understanding his advice; and, sitting down beside her, while the huntsman and Rose Flammock stood by, endeavoured to suggest such comfort as perhaps he scarcely felt himself.

"This is but a sally of your noble father's," he said; "and though it may seem it is made

on great hazard, yet who ever questioned Sir Raymond Berenger's policy of wars?—He is close and secret in his purposes. I guess right well he had not marched out as he proposes, unless he knew that the noble Earl of Arundel, or the mighty Constable of Chester, were close at hand."

"Think you this assuredly, good father?—Go, Raoul—go, my dearest Rose—look to the east—see if you cannot see banners or clouds of dust.—Listen—listen—hear you no trumpets from that quarter?"

"Alas! my lady," said Raoul, "the thunder of heaven could scarce be heard amid the howling of yonder Welch wolves." Eveline turned as he spoke, and looking towards the bridge, she beheld an appalling spectacle.

The river, whose stream washes on three sides the base of the proud eminence on which the castle is situated, curves away from the fortress and its corresponding village on the west, and the hill sinks downward to an extensive plain, so extremely level as to indicate its alluvial origin. Lower down, at the extremity of this plain, where the banks again close on the river, were situated

the manufacturing houses of the stout Flemings, which were now burning in a bright flame. The bridge, a high, narrow combination of arches of unequal size, was about half a mile distant from the castle, in the very centre of the plain. The river itself ran in a deep rocky channel, was often unfordable, and at all times difficult of passage, giving considerable advantage to the defenders of the castle, who had spent on other occasions many a dear drop of blood to defend the pass, which Raymond Berenger's fantastic scruples now induced him to abandon. The Welchmen, seizing the opportunity with the avidity with which men grasp an unexpected benefit, were fast crowding over the high and steep arches, while new bands, collecting from different points upon the farther bank, increased the continued stream of warriors, who, passing leisurely and uninterrupted, formed their line of battle on the plain opposite to the castle.

At first Father Aldrovand viewed their motions without anxiety, nay, with the scornful smile of one who observes an enemy in the act of falling into the snare spread for them by superior skill. Raymond Berenger, with his little body

of infantry and cavalry, were drawn up on the easy hill which is betwixt the castle and the plain, ascending from the former towards the fortress; and it seemed clear to the Dominican, who had not entirely forgotten in the cloister his ancient military experience, that it was the Knight's purpose to attack the disordered enemy when a certain number had crossed the river, and the others were partly on the farther side, and partly engaged in the slow and perilous manœuvre of effecting their passage. But when large bodies of the white-mantled Welchmen were permitted without interruption to take such order on the plain as their habits of fighting recommended, the monk's countenance, though he still endeavoured to speak encouragement to the terrified maiden, assumed a different and an anxious expression; and his acquired habits of resignation contended strenuously with his ancient military ardour. "Be patient," he said, "my daughter, and be of good comfort; thine eyes shall behold the dismay of yonder barbarous enemy. Let but a minute elapse, and thou shalt see them scattered like dust.—Saint George! they will surely cry thy name now, or never!"

The monk's beads passed meanwhile rapidly through his hands, but many an expression of military impatience mingled itself with his orisons. He could not conceive the cause why each successive throng of mountaineers, led under their different banners, and headed by their respective chieftains, was permitted, without interruption, to pass the difficult defile, and extend themselves in battle array on the near side of the bridge, while the English, or rather Anglo-Norman cavalry, remained stationary, without so much as laying their lances in rest. There remained, he thought, but one hope—one only rational explanation of this unaccountable inactivity—this voluntary surrender of every advantage of ground, when that of numbers was so tremendously on the side of the enemy. Father Aldrovand concluded, that the succours of the Constable of Chester, and other Lord Marchers, must be in the immediate vicinity, and that the Welch were only permitted to pass the river without opposition, that their retreat might be the more effectually cut off, and their defeat, with a deep river in their rear, rendered the more signally calamitous.

But even while he clung to this hope, the monk's heart sunk within him, as, looking in every direction from which the expected succours might arrive, he could neither see nor hear the slightest token which announced their approach. In a frame of mind approaching more nearly to despair than to hope, the old man continued alternately to tell his beads, to gaze anxiously around, and to address some words of consolation in broken phrases to the young lady, until the general shout of the Welch, ringing from the bank of the river to the battlements of the castle, warned him, in a note of exultation, that the very last of the British had defiled through the pass, and that their whole formidable array stood prompt for action upon the hither side of the river.

This thrilling and astounding clamour, to which each of the Welch lent his voice with all the energy of defiance, thirst of battle, and hope of conquest, was at length answered by the blast of the Norman trumpets,—the first sign of activity which had been exhibited on the part of Raymond Berenger. But cheerily as they rung, the trumpets, in comparison of the shout which they an-

swered, sounded like the whistle of the stout mariner amid the howling of the tempest.

At the same moment when the trumpets were blown, Berenger gave signal to the archers to discharge their arrows, and the men-at-arms to advanse under a hail-storm of shafts, javelins, and stones, shot, darted, and slung by the Welch against their steel-clad assailants.

The veterans of Raymond, on the other hand, stimulated by many victorious recollections, confident in the talents of their accomplished leader, and undismayed even by the desperation of their circumstances, charged the mass of the Welchmen with their usual determined valour. It was a gallant sight to see this little body of cavalry advance to the onset, their plumes floating above their helmets, their lances in rest, and projecting six feet in length before the breasts of their coursers; their shields hanging from their necks, that their left hands might have freedom to guide their horses; and the whole body rushing on with an equal front, and a momentum of speed, which increased with every moment. Such an onset might have startled naked men, (for such

were the Welch, in respect of the mail-sheathed Normans,) but it brought no terrors to the ancient British, who had long made it their boast that they exposed their bare bosoms and white tunics to the lances and swords of the men-at-arms, with as much confidence as if they had been born invulnerable. It was not indeed in their power to withstand the weight of the first shock, which, breaking their ranks, densely as they were arranged, carried the barbed horses into the very centre of their host, and well nigh up to the fatal standard, to which Raymond Berenger, bound by his fatal vow, had that day conceded so much vantage-ground. But they yielded like the billows, which give way, indeed, to the gallant ship, but only to assail her sides, and to unite in her wake. With wild and horrible clamours, they closed their tumultuous ranks around Berenger and his devoted followers, and a deadly scene of strife ensued.

The best warriors of Wales had on this occasion joined the standard of Gwenwyn; the arrows of the men of Gwentland, whose skill in archery almost equalled that of the Normans themselves;

rattled on the helmets of the men-at-arms; and the spears of the people of Dehenbarth, renowned for the sharpness and temper of their steel heads, were employed against the cuirasses not without fatal effect, notwithstanding the protection which these afforded to the rider.

It was in vain that the archery belonging to Raymond's little band, stout yeomen, who, for the most part, held possessions by military tenure, exhausted their quivers on the broad mark afforded them by the Welch army. It is probable, that every shaft carried a Welchman's life on its point; yet, to have afforded important relief to the cavalry, now closely and inextricably engaged, the slaughter ought to have been twenty-fold at least. Meantime, the Welch, galled by this incessant discharge, answered it by vollies from their own archers, whose numbers made some amends for their inferiority, and who were supported by numerous bodies of darters and slingers. So that the Norman archers, who had more than once attempted to descend from their position to operate a diversion in favour of Raymond and his devoted band, were now so closely engaged in

front, as obliged them to abandon all thoughts of such a movement.

Meanwhile, that chivalrous leader, who from the first had hoped for no more than an honourable death, laboured with all his power to render his fate signal by involving in it that of the Welch Prince, the author of the war. He cautiously avoided the expenditure of his strength by hewing among the British; but, with the shock of his managed horse, repelled the numbers who pressed on him, and leaving the plebeians to the swords of his companions, shouted his war-cry, and made his way towards the fatal standard of Gwenwyn, beside which, discharging at once the duties of a skilful leader and a brave soldier, the Prince had stationed himself. Raymond's experience of the Welch disposition, subject equally to the highest flood, and most sudden ebb of passion, gave him some hope that a successful attack upon this point, followed by the death or capture of the Prince, and the downfall of his standard, might even yet strike such a panic, as should change the fortunes of the day, otherwise so nearly desperate. The veteran, therefore, animated his comrades to

the charge by voice and example; and, in spite of all opposition, forced his way gradually onward. But Gwenwyn in person, surrounded by his best and noblest champions, offered a defence as obstinate as the assault was intrepid. In vain they were borne to the earth by the barbed horses, or hewed down by the invulnerable riders. Wounded and overthrown, the Britons continued their resistance, clung round the legs of the Norman steeds, and cumbered their advance; while their brethren, thrusting with pikes, proved every joint and crevice of the plate and mail, or grappling with the men-at-arms, strove to pull them from their horses by main force, or beat them down with their bills and Welch hooks. And woe betided those who were by these various means dismounted, for the long sharp knives worn by the Welch soon pierced them with a hundred wounds, and were then only merciful when the first which was inflicted was deadly.

The combat was at this point, and had raged for more than half an hour, when Berenger, having forced his horse within two spears' length of the British standard, he and Gwenwyn were so

near to each other as to exchange tokens of mutual defiance.

"Turn thee, Wolf of Wales," said Berenger, "and abide, if thou darest, one blow of a good knight's sword! Raymond Berenger spits at thee and thy banner."

"False Norman churl!" said Gwenwyn, swinging around his head a mace of prodigious weight, and already clottered with blood, "thy iron head-piece shall ill protect thy lying tongue, with which I will this day feed the ravens."

Raymond made no farther answer, but pushed his horse towards the Prince, who advanced to meet him with equal readiness. But ere they came within reach of each other's weapons, a Welch champion, devoted like the Romans who opposed the elephants of Pyrrhus, finding that the armour of Raymond's horse resisted the repeated thrusts of his spear, threw himself under the animal, and stabbed him in the belly with his long knife. The noble horse reared and fell, crushing with his weight the Briton who had wounded him; the helmet of the rider burst its clasps in the fall, and rolled away from his head, giving to view his no-

ble features and gray hairs. He made more than one effort to extricate himself from the fallen horse, but ere he could succeed, received his death's-wound from the hand of Gwenwyn, who hesitated not to strike him down with his mace while in the act of rising.

During the whole of this bloody day, Dennis Morolt's horse had kept pace for pace, and his arm blow for blow, with his master's. It seemed as if two different bodies had been moving under one act of volition. He husbanded his strength, or put it forth, exactly as he observed his knight did, and was close by his side when he made the last deadly effort. At that fatal moment, when Raymond Berenger rushed on the chief, the brave squire forced his way up to the standard, and, grasping it firmly, struggled for possession of it with a gigantic Briton, to whose care it had been confided, and who now exerted his utmost strength to defend it. But even while engaged in this mortal struggle, the eye of Morolt scarcely left his master; and when he saw him fall, his own force seemed by sympathy to abandon him, and the British champion had no longer any trouble in laying him prostrate among the slain.

The victory of the British was now complete. Upon the fall of their leader, the followers of Raymond Berenger would willingly have fled or surrendered. But the first was impossible, so closely had they been enveloped; and in the cruel wars maintained by the Welch upon their frontiers, quarter to the vanquished was out of question. A few of the men-at-arms were lucky enough to disentangle themselves from the tumult, and, not even attempting to enter the castle, fled in various directions, to carry their own fears among the inhabitants of the marches, by announcing the loss of the battle, and the fate of the far renowned Raymond Berenger.

The archers of the fallen leader, as they had never been so deeply involved in the combat, which had been chiefly maintained by the cavalry, became now, in their turn, the sole object of the enemy's attack. But when they saw the multitude come roaring towards them like a sea, with all its waves, they abandoned the bank which they had hitherto bravely defended, and began a regular retreat to the castle in the best order which they could, as the only remaining means of securing their lives. A few of their light-footed enemies attempt-

ed to intercept them, during the execution of this prudent manœuvre, by outstripping them in their march, and throwing themselves into the hollow way which led to the castle, to oppose their retreat. But the coolness of the English archers, accustomed to extremities of every kind, supported them on the present occasion. While a part of them, armed with glaives and bills, dislodged the Welch from the hollow way, the others, facing in the opposite direction, and parted into divisions, which alternately halted and retreated, maintained such a countenance as to check pursuit, and exchange a severe discharge of missiles with the Welch, by which both parties were considerable sufferers.

At length, having left more than two-thirds of their brave companions behind, the yeomanry attained the point, which, being commanded by arrows and engines from the battlements, might be considered as that of comparative safety. A volley of large stones, and square-headed bolts of great size and thickness, effectually stopped the farther progress of the pursuit, and those who had led it drew back their desultory forces to the plain, where,

with shouts of jubilee and exultation, their countrymen were employed in securing the plunder of the field; while some, impelled by hatred and revenge, mangled and mutilated the limbs of the dead Normans, in a manner unworthy of their cause and their own courage. The fearful yells with which this dreadful work was consummated, while it struck horror into the minds of the slender garrison of the Garde Doloureuse, inspired them at the same time with the resolution rather to defend the fortress to the last extremity, than to submit to the mercy of so vengeful an enemy.

CHAPTER V.

> That Baron he to his castle fled,
> To Barnard Castle then fled he;
> The uttermost walls were eathe to win,
> The Earls have won them speedilie;—
> The uttermost walls were stone and brick;
> But though they won them soon anon,
> Long ere they won the inmost walls,
> For they were hewn in rock of stone.
>
> PERCY'S *Reliques of Ancient Poetry.*

THE unhappy fate of the battle was soon evident to the anxious spectators upon the watch-towers of the Garde Doloureuse, which name the castle that day too well deserved. With difficulty the confessor mastered his own emotions to control those of the females on whom he attended, and who were now joined in their lamentation by many others—women, children, and infirm old men, the relatives of those whom they saw engaged in this unavailing contest. These helpless beings had been admitted to the castle for security's sake, and they had now thronged to the battle-

ments, from which Father Aldrovand found difficulty in making them descend, aware that the sight of them on the towers, that should have appeared lined with armed men, would be an additional encouragement to the exertions of the assailants. He urged the Lady Eveline to set an example to this groupe of helpless, yet untractable mourners.

Preserving, at least endeavouring to preserve, even in the extremity of grief, that composure which the manners of the times enjoined—for chivalry had its stoicism as well as philosophy—Eveline replied with a voice which she would fain have rendered firm, and which was tremulous in her despite—"Yes, father, you say well—here is no longer aught left for maidens to look upon. Warlike meed and honoured deed sunk when yonder white plume touched the bloody ground.—Come, maidens, there is no longer aught left us to see—to mass, to mass—the tourney is over."

There was wildness in her tone, and when she rose, with the air of one who would lead out a procession, she staggered, and would have fallen but

for the support of the confessor. Hastily wrapping her head in her mantle, as if ashamed of the agony of grief which she could not restrain, and of which her sobs and the low moaning sounds that issued from under the folds enveloping her face, declared the excess, she suffered Father Aldrovand to conduct her whither he would.

"Our gold," he said, "has changed to brass, our silver to dross, our wisdom to folly—it is His will, who confounds the councils of the wise, and shortens the arm of the mighty. To the chapel—to the chapel, Lady Eveline, and instead of vain repining, let us pray to God and the saints to turn away their displeasure, and to save the feeble remnant from the jaws of the devouring wolf."

Thus speaking, he half led, half supported Eveline, who was at the moment almost incapable of thought and action, to the castle-chapel, where, sinking before the altar, she assumed the attitude at least of devotion, though her thoughts, despite the pious words which her tongue faltered out mechanically, were upon the field of battle, be-

side the body of her slaughtered parent. The rest of the mourners imitated their young lady in her devotional posture, and in the absence of her thoughts. The consciousness that so many of the garrison had been cut off in Raymond's incautious sally, added to their sorrows the sense of personal insecurity, which was exaggerated by the cruelties which were too often exercised by the enemy, who, in the heat of victory, were said to spare neither sex nor age.

The monk, however, assumed among them the tone of authority which his character warranted, rebuked their wailing and ineffectual complaints, and having, as he thought, brought them to such a state of mind as better became their condition, he left them to their private devotions, to indulge his own anxious curiosity by inquiring into the defences of the castle. Upon the outward walls he found Wilkin Flammock, who, having done the office of a good and skilful captain in the mode of managing his artillery, and beaten back, as we have already seen, the advanced guard of the enemy, was now with his own hand measuring out to his little garrison no stinted allowance of wine.

"Have a care, good Wilkin," said the father, "that thou doest not exceed in this matter. Wine is, thou knowest, like fire and water, an excellent servant, but a very bad master."

"It will be long ere it overflow the deep and solid skulls of my countrymen," said Wilkin Flammock. "Our Flemish courage is like our Flanders horses—the one needs the spur, and the other must have a taste of the wine-pot; but, credit me, father, they are of an enduring generation, and will not shrink in the washing.—But indeed, if I were to give the knaves a cup more than enough, it were not altogether amiss, since they are like to have a platter the less."

"How do you mean?" cried the monk, starting; "I trust in the saints the provisions have been cared for?"

"Not so well as in your convent, good father," replied Wilkin, with the same immovable stolidity of countenance. "We had kept, as you know, too jolly a Christmas to have a very fat Easter. Yon Welch hounds, who helped to eat up our victuals, are now like to get into our hold for the lack of them."

"Thou talkest mere folly," answered the monk; "orders were last evening given by our lord, (whose soul God assoilzie!) to fetch in the necessary supplies from the country around."

"Ay, but the Welch were too sharp set to permit us to do that at our ease this morning, which should have been done weeks and months since. Our lord deceased, if deceased he be, was one of those who trusted to the edge of the sword, and even so hath come of it. Commend me to a cross-bow and a well-victualled castle, if I must needs fight at all—You look pale, my good father, a cup of wine will revive you."

The monk motioned away from him the untasted cup, which Wilkin pressed him to with clownish civility. "We have now, indeed," he said, "no refuge, save in prayer."

"Most true, good father," again replied the impassible Fleming; "pray therefore as much as you will. I will content myself with fasting, which will come whether I will or no."—At this moment a horn was heard before the gate.—"Look to the portcullis and the gate, ye knaves!—What news, Neil Hansen?"

"A messenger from the Welch tarries at the Mill-hill, just within shot of the cross-bows; he has a white flag, and demands admittance."

"Admit him not, upon thy life, till we be prepared for him," said Wilkin. "Bend the bonnie mangonel upon the place, and shoot him if he dare to stir from the spot where he stands till we get all prepared to receive him," said Flammock, in his native language. "And, Neil, thou houndsfoot, bestir thyself—let every pike, lance, and pole in the castle be ranged along the battlements, and pointed through the shot-holes—cut up some tapestry into the shape of banners, and shew them from the highest towers.—Be ready, when I give a signal, to strike *naker*,* and blow trumpets, if we have any; if not, some cow-horns—anything for a noise. And, hark ye, Neil Hansen, do you, and four or five of your fellows, go to the armoury and slip on coats-of-mail; our Netherlandish corslets do not appal them so much. Then let the Welch thief be blindfolded and brought in amongst us—Do you hold up your heads and keep silence—

* *Naker*—Drum.

leave me to deal with him—only have a care there be no English among us."

The monk, who in his travels had acquired some slight knowledge of the Flemish language, had well nigh started when he heard the last article in Wilkin's instructions to his countryman, but commanded himself, although a little surprised, both at this suspicious circumstance, and at the readiness and dexterity with which the rough-hewn Fleming seemed to adapt his preparations to the rules of war and of sound policy.

Wilkin, on his part, was not very certain whether the monk had not heard and understood more of what he said to his countryman than what he had intended. As if to lull asleep any suspicion which Father Aldrovand might entertain, he repeated to him in English most of the directions which he had given, adding, "Well, good father, what think you of it?"

"Excellent well," answered the father, "and done as you had practised war from the cradle, instead of weaving broad-cloth."

"Nay, spare not your jibes, father," answered Wilkin.—"I know full well that you English

think that Flemings have nought in their brain-pan but sodden beef and cabbage; yet you see there goes wisdom to weaving of webs."

"Right, Master Wilkin Flammock," answered the father; "but, good Fleming, wilt thou tell me what answer thou wilt make to the Welch Prince's summons?"

"Reverend father, first tell me what the summons will be," replied the Fleming.

"To surrender this castle upon the instant," answered the monk. "What will be your reply?"

"My answer will be—Nay, unless upon good composition."

"How, Sir Fleming! dare you mention composition and the Castle of the Garde Doloureuse, in one sentence?" said the monk.

"Not if I may do better," answered the Fleming. "But would your reverence have me dally until the question amongst the garrison be, whether a plump priest or a fat Fleming will be the better flesh to furnish their shambles?"

"Pshaw," replied Father Aldrovand, "thou canst not mean such folly. Relief must arrive within twenty-four hours at farthest. Raymond

Berenger expected it for certain within such a space."

"Raymond Berenger hath been deceived this morning in more matters than one," answered the Fleming.

"Hark thee, Flanderkin," answered the monk, whose retreat from the world had not altogether quenched his military habits and propensities, "I counsel thee to deal uprightly in this matter, as thou doest regard thine own life; for here are as many English left alive, notwithstanding the slaughter of the day, as may well suffice to fling the Flemish bull-frogs into the castle-ditch, should they have cause to think thou meanest falsely, in the keeping of this castle, and the defence of the Lady Eveline."

"Let not your reverence be moved with unnecessary and idle fears," replied Wilkin Flammock—"I am castellane in this house, by command of its lord, and what I hold for the advantage of mine service, that will I do."

"But I," said the angry monk, "I am the servant of the Pope—the chaplain of this castle,

with power to bind and to unloose. I fear me thou art no true Christian, Wilkin Flammock, but dost lean to the heresy of the mountaineers. Thou hast refused to take the blessed cross—thou hast breakfasted, and drunk both ale and wine, ere thou hast heard mass. Thou art not to be trusted, man, and I will not trust thee—I demand to be present at the conference betwixt thee and the Welchman."

"It may not be, good father," said Wilkin, with the same smiling, heavy countenance, which he maintained on all occasions of life, however urgent. "It is true, as thou sayest, good father, that I have mine own reasons for not marching quite so far as the gates of Jericho at present; and lucky I have such reason, since I had not been here to defend the gate of the Garde Doloureuse. It is also true that I may have been sometimes obliged to visit my mills earlier than the chaplain was called by his zeal to the altar, and that my stomach brooks not working ere I break my fast. But for this, father, I have paid a mulct even to your worshipful reverence, and methinks since you are pleased to remember the confession so exactly,

you should not forget the penance and the absolution."

The monk, in alluding to the secrets of the confessional, had gone a step beyond what the rules of his order and of the church permitted. He was baffled by the Fleming's reply, and, finding him unmoved by the charge of heresy, he could only answer, in some confusion, "You refuse, then, to admit me to your conference with the Welchman?"

"Reverend father," said Wilkin, "it altogether respecteth secular matters. If aught of religious tenor should intervene, you shall be summoned without delay."

"I will be there in spite of thee, thou Flemish ox," muttered the monk to himself, but in a tone not to be heard by the bystanders; and so speaking, he left the battlements.

Wilkin Flammock, a few minutes afterwards, having first seen that all was arranged on the battlements, so as to give an imposing idea of a strength which did not exist, descended to a small guard-room, betwixt the outer and inner gate, where he was attended by half-a-dozen of his own peo-

ple, disguised in the Norman armour which they had found in the armoury of the castle,—their strong, tall, and bulky forms, and motionless postures, causing them to look rather like trophies of some past age, than living and existing soldiers. Surrounded by these huge and inanimate figures, in a little vaulted room which almost excluded day-light, Flammock received the Welch envoy, who was led in blindfolded betwixt two Flemings, yet not so carefully watched but that they permitted him to have a glimpse of the preparations on the battlements, which had, in fact, been made chiefly for the purpose of imposing on him. For the same purpose an occasional clatter of arms was made without; voices were heard, as if officers were going their rounds; and other sounds of active preparation seemed to announce that a numerous and regular garrison was preparing to receive an attack.

When the bandage was removed from Jorworth's eyes,—for the same individual who had formerly brought Gwenwyn's offer of alliance, now bare his summons of surrender,—he looked haughtily around him, and demanded to whom he was to

deliver the commands of his master, the Gwenwyn, son of Cyvelioc, Prince of Powis.

"His highness," answered Flammock, with his usual smiling indifference of manner, "must be contented to treat with Wilkin Flammock of the Fulling-mills, deputed governor of the Garde Doloureuse."

"Thou deputed governor!" exclaimed Jorworth; "thou!—a low-country weaver!—it is impossible. Low as they are, the English Crogan cannot have sunk to a point so low, as to be commanded by *thee!*—These men seem English, to them I will deliver my message."

"You may if you will," replied Wilkin, "but if they return you any answer save by signs, you shall call me *schelm*."

"Is this true?" said the Welch envoy, looking towards the men-at-arms, as they seemed, by whom Flammock was attended; "are you really come to this pass? I thought that the mere having been born on British earth, though the children of spoilers and invaders, had inspired you with too much pride to brook the yoke of a base mechanic. Or, if you are not courageous, should you not be

cautious ?—Well speaks the proverb, Woe to him that will trust a stranger !—Still mute—still silent? —answer me by word or sign—Do you really call and acknowledge him as your leader ?"

The men in armour with one accord nodded their casques in reply to Jorworth's question, and then remained motionless as before.

The Welchman, with the acute genius of his country, suspected there was something in this which he could not entirely comprehend, but, preparing himself to be upon his guard, he proceeded as follows: " Be it as it may, I care not who hears the message of my sovereign, since it brings pardon and mercy to the inhabitants of this Castell an Carrig,* which you have called the Garde Doloureuse, to cover the usurpation of the territory by the change of the name. Upon surrender of the same to the Prince of Powis, with its dependencies, and with the arms which it contains, and with the maiden Eveline Berenger, all within the castle shall depart unmolested, and have safe con-

* Castle of the Craig.

duct wheresoever they will, to go beyond the marches of the Cymry."

"And how, if we obey not this summons?" said the imperturbable Wilkin Flammock.

"Then shall your portion be with Raymond Berenger, your late leader," replied Jorworth, his eyes, while he was speaking, glancing with the vindictive ferocity which dictated his answer. "So many strangers as be here amongst ye, so many bodies to the ravens, so many heads to the gibbet!—It is long since the kites have had such a banquet of lurdane Flemings and false Saxons."

"Friend Jorworth," said Wilkin, "if such be thy only message, bear mine answer back to thy master, That wise men trust not to the words of others that safety, which they can secure by their own deeds. We have walls high and strong enough, deep moats, and plenty of munition, both long-bow and arblast. We will keep the castle, trusting the castle will keep us, till God shall send us succour."

"Do not peril your lives on such an issue," said the Welch emissary, changing his language to the Flemish, which, from occasional communi-

cation with those of that nation in Pembrokeshire, he spoke fluently, and which he now adopted, as if to conceal the purport of his discourse from the supposed English in the apartment. "Hark thee hither," he proceeded, "good Fleming; knowest thou not that he in whom is your trust, the Constable De Lacy, hath bound himself by his vow to engage in no quarrel till he crosses the sea, and cannot come to your aid without perjury? He and the other Lords Marchers have drawn their faces far northward to join the host of Crusaders. What will it avail you to put us to the toil and trouble of a long siege, when you can hope no rescue?"

"And what will it avail me more," said Wilkin, answering in his native language, and looking at the Welchman fixedly, yet with a countenance from which all expression seemed studiously banished, and which exhibited, upon features otherwise tolerable, a remarkable compound of dulness and simplicity, "what will it avail me whether your trouble be great or small?"

"Come, friend Flammock," said the Welchman, "frame not thyself more unapprehensive

than nature hath formed thee. The glen is dark, but a sunbeam can light the side of it. Thy utmost efforts cannot prevent the fall of this castle; but thou mayest hasten it, and that shall avail thee much." Thus speaking, he drew close up to Wilkin, and sunk his voice to an insinuating whisper, as he said, "Never did the withdrawing of a bar, or the raising of a portcullis, bring such vantage to Fleming as they may to thee, if thou wilt."

"I only know," said Wilkin, "that the drawing the one, and the dropping the other, have cost me my whole worldly substance."

"Fleming, it shall be compensated to thee with an overflowing measure. The liberality of Gwenwyn is as the summer rain."

"My whole mills and buildings have been this morning burnt to the earth——"

"Thou shalt have a thousand marks of silver, man, in the place of thy goods," said the Welchman; but the Fleming continued, without seeming to hear him, to number up his losses.

"My lands are forayed, twenty kine driven off, and——"

"Threescore shall replace them," interrupted Jorworth, "chosen from the most bright-skinned of the spoil."

"But my daughter—but the Lady Eveline"—said the Fleming, with some slight change in his monotonous voice, which seemed to express doubt and perplexity—"You are cruel conquerors, and—"

"To those who resist us we are fearful," said Jorworth, "but not to such as shall deserve clemency by surrender. Gwenwyn will forget the contumelies of Raymond, and raise his daughter to high honour among the daughters of the Cymry. For thine own child, form but a wish for her advantage, and it shall be fulfilled to the uttermost. Now, Fleming, we understand each other."

"I understand thee, at least," said Flammock.

"And I thee, I trust," said Jorworth, bending his keen, wild blue eye on the stolid and unexpressive face of the Netherlander, like an eager student who seeks to discover some hidden and mysterious meaning in a passage, the direct import of which seems trite and trivial.

"You believe that you understand me," said

Wilkin; "but here lies the difficulty,—which of us shall trust the other?"

"Darest thou ask?" answered Jorworth. "Is it for thee, or such as thee, to express doubt of the purposes of the Prince of Powis?"

"I know them not, good Jorworth, but through thee; and well I wot thou art not one who will let thy traffic miscarry for want of aid from the breath of thy mouth."

"As I am a Christian man," said Jorworth, hurrying asseveration on asseveration—"by the soul of my father—by the faith of my mother—by the black rood of——"

"Stop, good Jorworth—thou heapest thine oaths too thickly on each other, to value them to the right estimate," said Flammock; "that which is so lightly pledged, is sometimes not thought worth redeeming. Some part of the promised guerdon in hand the whilst, were worth an hundred oaths."

"Thou suspicious churl, darest thou doubt my word?"

"No—by no means," answered Wilkin;

"ne'ertheless I will believe thy deed more readily."

"To the point, Fleming," said Jorworth—"What wouldst thou have of me?"

"Let me have some present sight of the money thou didst promise, and I will think of the rest of thy proposal."

"Base silver-broker!" answered Jorworth, "thinkest thou the Prince of Powis has as many money-bags, as the merchants of thy land of sale and barter? He gathers treasures by his conquests, as the water-spout sucks up water by its strength; but it is to disperse them among his followers, as the cloudy column restores its contents to earth and ocean. The silver that I promise thee has yet to be gathered out of the Saxon chests—nay, the casket of Berenger himself must be ransacked to make up the tale."

"Methinks I could do that myself, (having full power in the castle,) and so save you a labour," said the Fleming.

"True," answered Jorworth, "but it would be at the expense of a cord and a noose, whether the Welch took the place or the Normans relieved

it—the one would expect their booty entire—the other their countryman's treasures to be delivered undiminished."

"I may not gainsay that," said the Fleming. "Well, say I were content to trust you thus far, why not return my cattle, which are in your own hands, and at your disposal? If you do not pleasure me in something beforehand, what can I expect of you afterwards?"

"I would pleasure you in a greater matter," answered the equally suspicious Welchman. "But what would it avail thee to have thy cattle within the fortress? They can be better cared for on the plain beneath."

"In faith," replied the Fleming, "thou sayest truth—they will be but a trouble to us here, where we have so many already provided for the use of the garrison.—And yet, when I consider it more closely, we have enough of forage to maintain all we have, and more. Now, my cattle are of a peculiar stock, brought from the rich pastures of Flanders, and I desire to have them restored ere your axes and Welch hooks be busy with their hides."

"You shall have them this night, hide and horn," said Jorworth; "it is but a small earnest of a great boon."

"Thanks to your munificence," said the Fleming; "I am a simple-minded man, and bound my wishes to the recovery of my own property."

"Thou wilt be ready, then, to deliver the castle?" said Jorworth.

"Of that we will talk farther to-morrow," said Wilkin Flammock; "if these English and Normans should suspect such a purpose, we should have wild work—they must be fully dispersed ere I can hold farther communication on the subject. Meanwhile, I pray thee, depart suddenly, and as if offended with the tenor of our discourse."

"Yet would I fain know something more fixed and absolute," said Jorworth.

"Impossible—impossible," said the Fleming; "see you not yonder tall fellow begins already to handle his dagger—Go hence in haste, and angrily—and forget not the cattle."

"I will not forget them," said Jorworth; "but if thou keep not faith with us——"

So speaking, he left the apartment with a ges-

ture of menace, partly really directed to Wilkin himself, partly assumed in consequence of his advice. Flammock replied in English, as if that all around might understand what he said,

"Do thy worst, Sir Welchman! I am a true man; I defy the proposals of rendition, and will hold out this castle to thy shame and thy master's!—Here—let him be blindfolded once more, and returned in safety to his attendants without; the next Welchman who appears before the gate of the Garde Doloureuse, shall be more sharply received."

The Welchman was blindfolded and withdrawn, when, as Wilkin Flammock himself left the guard-room, one of the seeming men-at-arms who had been present at the interview, said in his ear in English, "Thou art a false traitor, Flammock, and shalt die a traitor's death!"

Startled at this, the Fleming would have questioned the man farther, but he had disappeared so soon as the words were uttered. Flammock was disconcerted by this circumstance, which shewed him that his interview with Jorworth had been observed, and its purpose known or conjectured,

by some one who was a stranger to his confidence, and might thwart his intentions; and he quickly after learned that this was the case.

CHAPTER VI.

The daughter of the slaughtered Raymond had descended from the elevated station whence she had beheld the field of battle, in the agony of grief natural to a child whose eyes have beheld the death of an honoured and beloved father. But her station, and the principles of chivalry in which she had been trained up, did not permit any prolonged or needless indulgence of inactive sorrow. In raising the young and beautiful of the female sex to the rank of princesses, or rather goddesses, the spirit of that singular system exacted from them, in requital, a tone of character, and a line of conduct, superior and something contradictory to that of natural or merely human feeling. Its heroines frequently resembled portraits shewn by an

artificial light—strong and luminous, and which placed in high relief the objects on which it was turned; but having still something of adventitious splendour, which, compared with that of the natural day, seemed glaring and exaggerated.

It was not permitted to the orphan of the Garde Doloureuse, the daughter of a line of heroes, whose stem was to be found in the race of Thor, Balder, Odin, and other deified warriors of the North, whose beauty was the theme of a hundred minstrels, and her eyes the leading star of half the chivalry of the warlike marches of Wales, to mourn her sire with the ineffectual tears of a village maiden. Young as she was, and horrible as was the incident which she had but that instant witnessed, it was not altogether so appalling to her as to a maiden whose eye had not been accustomed to the rough, and often fatal sports of chivalry, and whose residence had not been among scenes and men where war and death had been the unceasing theme of every tongue, whose imagination had not been familiarized with wild and bloody events, or, finally, who had not been trained up

to consider an honourable "death under shield," as that of a field of battle was termed, as a more desirable termination to the life of a warrior, than that lingering and unhonoured fate which comes slowly on, to conclude the listless and helpless inactivity of prolonged old age. Eveline, while she wept for her father, felt her bosom glow when she recollected that he died in the blaze of his fame, and amidst heaps of his slaughtered enemies; and when she thought of the exigencies of her own situation, it was with the determination to defend her own liberty, and to avenge her father's death, by every means which Heaven had left within her power.

The aids of religion were not forgotten; and according to the custom of the times, and the doctrines of the Roman church, she endeavoured to propitiate the favour of Heaven by vows as well as prayers. In a small crypt, or oratory, adjoining to the chapel, was hung over an altar-piece, on which a lamp constantly burned, a small picture of the Virgin Mary, revered as a household and peculiar deity by the family of Berenger, one

of whose ancestors had brought it from the Holy Land, whither he had gone upon pilgrimage. It was of the period of the Lower Empire, a Grecian painting, not unlike those which in Catholic countries are often imputed to the Evangelist Luke. The crypt in which it was placed was accounted a shrine of uncommon sanctity—nay, supposed to have displayed miraculous powers; and Eveline, by the daily garland of flowers which she offered, and by the constant prayers with which they were accompanied, had constituted herself the peculiar votaress of Our Lady of the Garde Doloureuse, for so the picture was named.

Now, apart from others, alone, and in secrecy, sinking in the extremity of her sorrow before the shrine of her patroness, she besought the protection of kindred purity for the defence of her freedom and honour, and invoked vengeance on the wild and treacherous chieftain who had slain her father, and was now beleaguering her place of strength. Not only did she vow a large donative in lands to the shrine of the protectress whose aid she implored; but the oath passed her lips, (even

though they faltered, and though something within her remonstrated against the vow,) that whatsoever favoured knight Our Lady of the Garde Doloureuse might employ for her rescue, should obtain from her in guerdon whatever boon she might honourably grant, were it that of her virgin hand at the holy altar. Taught as she was to believe, by the assurances of many a knight, that such a surrender was the highest boon which Heaven could bestow, she felt as discharging a debt of gratitude when she placed herself entirely at the disposal of the pure and blessed patroness in whose aid she confided. Perhaps there lurked in this devotion some earthly hope of which she was herself scarce conscious, and which reconciled her to the indefinite sacrifice thus freely offered. The Virgin, (this flattering hope might insinuate,) kindest and most benevolent of patronesses, will use compassionately the power resigned to her, and *He* will be the favoured champion of Maria, upon whom her votaress would most willingly confer favour.

But if there was such a hope, as something

selfish will often mingle with our noblest and purest emotions, it arose unconscious of Eveline herself, who, in the full assurance of implicit faith, and fixing on the representative of her adoration, eyes in which the most earnest supplication, the most humble confidence, struggled with unbidden tears, was perhaps more beautiful than she had been seen, when, young as she was, she was selected to bestow the prize of chivalry in the lists of Chester. It was no wonder that, in such a moment of high excitation, when prostrated in devotion before a being of whose power to protect her, and to make her protection assured by a visible sign, she doubted nothing, the Lady Eveline conceived she saw with her own eyes the acceptance of her vow. As she gazed on the picture with an overstrained eye, and an imagination heated with enthusiasm, the expression seemed to alter from the hard outline, fashioned by the Greek painter; the eyes appeared to become animated, and to return with looks of compassion the suppliant entreaties of the votaress, and the mouth visibly arranged itself into a smile of inexpressible

sweetness. It even seemed to her that the head made a gentle inclination.

Overpowered by supernatural awe at appearances, of which her faith permitted her not to question the reality, the Lady Eveline folded her arms on her bosom, and prostrated her forehead on the pavement, as the posture most fitting to listen to divine communication.

But her vision went not so far; there was neither sound nor voice, and when, after stealing her eyes all around the crypt in which she knelt, she again raised them to the figure of Our Lady, the features seemed to be in the form in which the limner had sketched them, saving that, to Eveline's imagination, they still retained an august and yet gracious expression, which she had not before remarked upon the countenance. With awful reverence, almost amounting to fear, yet comforted, and even elated, with the visitation she had witnessed, the maiden repeated again and again the orisons which she thought most grateful to the ear of her benefactress; and, rising at length, retired backwards, as from the presence of a sovereign, until she attained the outer chapel.

Here one or two females still knelt before the saints which the walls and niches presented for adoration; but the rest of the terrified suppliants, too anxious to prolong their devotions, had dispersed through the castle to learn tidings of their friends, and to obtain some refreshment, or at least some place of repose for themselves and their families.

Bowing her head, and muttering an ave to each saint as she passed his image, (for impending danger makes men observant of the rites of devotion,) the Lady Eveline had almost reached the door of the chapel, when a man-at-arms, as he seemed, entered hastily; and, with a louder voice than suited the holy place, unless when need was most urgent, demanded the Lady Eveline. Impressed with the feelings of veneration which the late scene had produced, she was about to rebuke his military rudeness, when he spoke again, and in anxious haste, "Daughter, we are betrayed!" and though the form, and the coat-of-mail which covered it, were those of a soldier, the voice was that of Father Aldrovand, who, eager and anxious

at the same time, disengaged himself from the mail hood, and shewed his countenance.

"Father," she said, "what means this? Have you forgotten the confidence in Heaven which you are wont to recommend, that you bear other arms than your order assigns to you?"

"It may come to that ere long," said Father Aldrovand; "for I was a soldier ere I was a monk. But now I have donn'd this harness to discover treachery, not to resist force. Ah! my beloved daughter—we are dreadfully beset—foemen without—traitors within! The false Fleming, Wilkin Flammock, is treating for the surrender of the castle!"

"Who dares say so?" said a veiled female, who had been kneeling unnoticed in a sequestered corner of the chapel, but who now started up and came boldly betwixt Lady Eveline and the monk.

"Go hence, thou saucy minion," said the monk, surprised at this bold interruption; "this concerns not thee."

"But it doth concern me," said the damsel, throwing back her veil, and discovering the ju-

venile countenance of Rose, the daughter of Wilkin Flammock, her eyes sparkling, and her cheeks blushing with anger, the vehemence of which made a singular contrast with the very fair complexion, and almost infantine features of the speaker, whose whole form and figure was that of a girl who has scarce emerged from childhood, and indeed whose general manners were as gentle and bashful as they now seemed bold, impassioned, and undaunted.—" Doth it not concern me," she said, " that my father's honest name should be tainted with treason? Doth it not concern the stream when the fountain is troubled? It doth concern me, and I will know the author of the calumny."

" Damsel," said Eveline, " restrain thy useless passion; the good father, though he cannot intentionally calumniate thy father, speaks, it may be, from false report."

" As I am an unworthy priest," said the father, " I speak from the report of my own ears. Upon the oath of my order, myself heard this Wilkin Flammock chaffering with the Welch-

man for the surrender of the Garde Doloureuse. By help of this hauberk and mail hood, I gained admittance to a conference where he thought there were no English ears. They spoke Flemish too, but I knew the jargon of old."

"The Flemish," said the angry maiden, whose headstrong passion led her to speak first in answer to the last insult offered, "is no jargon like your piebald English, half Norman, half Saxon, but a noble Gothic tongue, spoken by the brave warriors who fought against the Roman Kaisars, when Britain bent the neck to them—and as for this he has said of Wilkin Flammock," she continued, collecting her ideas into more order as she went on, "believe it not, my dearest lady; but, as you value the honour of your own noble father, confide, as in the Evangelists, in the honesty of mine!" This she spoke with an imploring tone of voice, mingled with sobs, as if her heart had been breaking.

Eveline endeavoured to soothe her attendant. "Rose," she said, "in this evil time suspicions will light on the best men, and misunderstandings

will arise among the best friends. Let us hear the good father state what he hath to charge upon your parent. Fear not but that he shall be heard in his defence. Thou wert wont to be quiet and reasonable."

"I am neither quiet nor reasonable on this matter," said Rose, with redoubled indignation; "and it is ill of you, lady, to listen to the falsehoods of that reverend mummer, who is neither true priest nor true soldier. But I will fetch one who shall confront him either in casque or cowl."

So saying, she went hastily out of the chapel, while the monk, after some pedantic circumlocution, acquainted the Lady Eveline with what he had overheard betwixt Jorworth and Wilkin; and proposed to her to draw together the few English who were in the castle, and take possession of the innermost square tower; a keep which, as usual in Gothic fortresses of the Norman period, was situated so as to make considerable defence, even after the exterior works of the castle, which it commanded, were in the hand of the enemy.

"Father," said Eveline, still confident in the

vision she had lately witnessed, "this were good counsel in extremity; but otherwise, it were to create the very evil we fear, by setting our garrison at odds amongst themselves. I have a strong, and not unwarranted confidence, good father, in our blessed Lady of this Garde Doloureuse, that we will attain at once vengeance on our barbarous enemies, and escape from our present jeopardy; and I call you to witness the vow I have made, that to him whom Our Lady should employ to work us succour, I will refuse nothing, were it my father's inheritance, or the hand of his daughter."

"*Ave Maria! Ave Regina Cœli!*" said the priest; "on a rock more sure you could not have founded your trust.—But, daughter," he continued, after the proper ejaculation had been made, "have you never heard, even by a hint, that there was a treaty for your hand betwixt our much honoured lord, of whom we are cruelly bereft, (may God assoilzie his soul!) and the great house of Lacy?"

"Something I may have heard," said Eveline, dropping her eyes, while a slight tinge suffused her cheek; "but I refer me to the disposal of Our Lady of Succour and Consolation."

As she spoke, Rose entered the chapel with the same vivacity she had shewn in leaving it, leading by the hand her father, whose sluggish though firm step, vacant countenance, and heavy demeanour, formed the strongest contrast to the rapidity of her motions, and the anxious animation of her address. Her task of dragging him forward might have reminded the spectator of some of those ancient monuments on which a small cherub, singularly inadequate to the task, is often represented as hoisting upward towards the empyrean the fleshly bulk of some ponderous tenant of the tomb, whose disproportioned weight bids fair to render ineffectual the benevolent and spirited exertions of its fluttering guide and assistant.

"Roschen—my child—what grieves thee?" said the Netherlander, as he yielded to his daughter's violence with a smile, which, being on the countenance of a father, had more of expression and feeling than those which seemed to have made their constant dwelling upon his lips.

"Here stands my father," said the impatient maiden; "impeach him with treason, who can or

dare! There stands Wilkin Flammock, son of Dieterick the Cramer of Antwerp,—let those accuse him to his face who slandered him behind his back!"

"Speak, Father Aldrovand," said the Lady Eveline; "we are young in our lordship, and, alas! the duty hath descended upon us in an evil hour, yet we will, so may God and Our Lady help us, hear and judge of your accusation to the utmost of our power."

"This Wilkin Flammock," said the monk, "however bold he hath made himself in villainy, dares not deny that I heard him with my own ears treat for the surrender of the castle."

"Strike him, father!" said the indignant Rose, —"strike the disguised mummer! The steel hauberk may be struck, though not the monk's frock —strike him, or tell him that he lies foully!"

"Peace, Roschen, thou art mad," said her father, angrily; "the monk hath more truth than sense about him, and I would his ears had been farther off when he thrust them into what concerned him not."

Rose's countenance fell when she heard her fa-

ther bluntly avow the treasonable communication of which she had thought him incapable—she dropt the hand by which she had dragged him into the chapel, and stared on the Lady Eveline, with eyes which seemed starting from their sockets, and a countenance from which the blood, with which it was so lately highly coloured, had retreated to garrison the heart.

Eveline looked upon the culprit with a countenance in which sweetness and dignity were mingled with sorrow. "Wilkin," she said, "I could not have believed this. What! on the very day of thy confiding benefactor's death, canst thou have been tampering with his murderers, to deliver up the castle, and betray thy trust!—But I will not upbraid thee—I deprive thee of the trust reposed in so unworthy a person, and appoint thee to be kept in ward in the western tower, till God send us relief; when, it may be, thy daughter's merits shall atone for thy offences, and save farther punishment.—See that our commands be presently obeyed."

"Yes—yes—yes!" exclaimed Rose, hurrying one word on the other as fast and vehemently as

she could articulate—"Let us go—let us go to the darkest dungeon—darkness befits us better than light."

The monk, on the other hand, perceiving that the Fleming made no motion to obey the mandate of arrest, came forward, in a manner more suiting his ancient profession and present disguise, than his spiritual character; and with the words, "I attach thee, Wilkin Flammock, of acknowledged treason to your liege lady," would have laid hand upon him, had not the Fleming stepped back and warned him off, with a menacing and determined gesture, while he said,—"Ye are mad!—all of you English are mad when the moon is full, and my silly girl hath caught the malady.—Lady, your honoured father gave me a charge, which I purpose to execute to the best for all parties, and you cannot, being a minor, deprive me of it at your idle pleasure.—Father Aldrovand, a monk makes no lawful arrests.—Daughter Roschen, hold your peace and dry your eyes—you are a fool."

"I am, I am," said Rose, drying her eyes and regaining her elasticity of manner—"I am in-

deed a fool, and worse than a fool, for a moment to doubt my father's probity.—Confide in him, dearest lady; he is wise though he is grave, and kind though he is plain and homely in his speech. Should he prove false he will fare the worse! for I will plunge myself from the pinnacle of the Warder's Tower to the bottom of the moat, and he shall lose his own daughter for betraying his master's."

"This is all frenzy," said the monk—"Who trusts avowed traitors?—Here, Normans, English, to the rescue of your liege lady—Bows and bills—bows and bills!"

"You may spare your throat for your next homily, good father," said the Netherlander, "or call in good Flemish, since you understand it, for to no other language will those within hearing reply."

He then approached the Lady Eveline with a real or affected air of clumsy kindness, and something as nearly approaching to courtesy as his manners and features could assume. He bade her good night, and, assuring her that he would act for the best, left the chapel. The monk was about

to break forth into revilings, but Eveline, with more prudence, checked his zeal.

"I cannot," she said, "but hope that this man's intentions are honest——"

"Now, God's blessings on you, lady, for that very word!" said Rose, eagerly interrupting her, and kissing her hand.

"But if unhappily they are doubtful," continued Eveline, "it is not by reproach that we can bring him to a better purpose. Good father, give an eye to the preparations for resistance, and see nought omitted that our means furnish for the defence of the castle."

"Fear nothing, my dearest daughter," said Aldrovand; "there are still some English hearts amongst us, and we will rather kill and eat the Flemings themselves, than surrender the castle."

"That were food as dangerous to come by as bear's venison, father," answered Rose, bitterly, still on fire with the idea that the monk treated her nation with suspicion and contumely.

On these terms they separated;—the women to indulge their fears and sorrows in private grief, or alleviate them by private devotion; the monk to

try to discover what were the real purposes of Wilkin Flammock, and to counteract them if possible, should they seem to indicate treachery. His eye, however, though sharpened by strong suspicion, saw nothing to strengthen his fears, excepting that the Fleming had, with considerable military skill, placed the principal posts of the castle in the charge of his own countrymen, which must make any attempt to dispossess him of his present authority both difficult and dangerous. The monk at length retired, summoned by the duties of the evening service, and with the disposition to be stirring with the light the next morning.

CHAPTER VII.

O, sadly shines the morning sun
On leaguer'd castle wall,
When bastion, tower, and battlement,
Seem nodding to their fall.
Old Ballad.

True to his resolution, and telling his beads as he went, that he might lose no time, Father Aldrovand began his rounds in the castle so soon as day-light had touched the top of the eastern horizon. A natural instinct led him first to those stalls which, had the fortress been properly victualled for siege, ought to have been tenanted by cattle; and what was his astonishment to see more than a score of fat kine and bullocks in the place which had last night been empty! One of them had already been carried to the shambles, and a Fleming or two, who played butchers on the occasion, were dividing the carcase for the cook's use. The good father had well nigh cried out, a miracle; but, not to be too precipitate, he limit-

ed his transport to a private exclamation in honour of Our Lady of the Garde Doloureuse.

"Who talks of lack of provender!—who speaks of surrender now!" he said. "Here is enough to maintain us till Hugo De Lacy arrives, were he to sail back from Cyprus to our relief. I did purpose to have fasted this morning, as well to save victuals as on a religious score; but the blessing of the saints must not be slighted.—Sir Cook, let me have half a yard or so of broiled beef presently; bid the pantler send me a manchet, and the butler a cup of wine. I will take a running breakfast on the western battlements."

At this place, which was rather the weakest point of the Garde Doloureuse, the good father found Wilkin Flammock anxiously superintending the necessary measures of defence. He greeted him courteously, congratulated him on the stock of provisions with which the castle had been supplied during the night, and was inquiring how they had been so happily introduced through the Welch besiegers, when Wilkin took the first occasion to interrupt him.

"Of all this another time, good father; but I

wish at present, and before other discourse, to consult thee on a matter which presses my conscience, and moreover deeply concerns my worldly estate."

"Speak on, my excellent son," said the father, conceiving that he should thus gain the key to Wilkin's real intentions. "O, a tender conscience is a jewel! and he that will not listen when it saith, 'pour out thy doubts into the ear of the priest,' shall one day have his own dolorous outcries choked with fire and brimstone. Thou wert ever of a tender conscience, son Wilkin, though thou hast but a rough and borrel bearing."

"Well, then," said Wilkin, "you are to know, good father, that I have had some dealings with my neighbour, Jan Vanwelt, concerning my daughter Rose, and that he has paid me certain guilders on condition I will match her to him."

"Pshaw, pshaw! my good son," said the disappointed confessor, "this gear can lie over—this is no time for marrying or giving in marriage, when we are all like to be murdered."

"Nay, but hear me, good father," said the

Fleming, "for this point of conscience concerns the present case more nearly than you wot of.—You must know I have no will to bestow Rose on this same Jan Vanwelt, who is old, and of ill conditions; and I would know of you whether I may, in conscience, refuse him my consent."

"Truly," said Aldrovand, "Rose is a pretty lass, though somewhat hasty; and I think you may honestly withdraw your consent, always on paying back the guilders you have received."

"But there lies the pinch, good father," said the Fleming—"the refunding this money will reduce me to utter poverty. The Welch have destroyed my substance; and this handful of money is all, God help me! on which I must begin the world again."

"Nevertheless, son Wilkin," said Aldrovand, "thou must keep thy word, or pay the forfeit; for what saith the text? *Quis habitabit in tabernaculo, quis requiescet in monte sancto?*—Who shall ascend to the tabernacle, and dwell in the holy mountain? Is it not answered again, *Qui jurat proximo et non decipit?*—Go to, my son—break not thy plighted word for a little filthy lucre—

better is an empty stomach and an hungry heart with a clear conscience, than a fatted ox with iniquity and word-breaking.—Sawest thou not our late noble lord, who (may his soul be happy!) chose rather to die in unequal battle, like a true knight, than live a perjured man, though he had but spoken a rash word to a Welchman over a wine flask?"

"Alas! then," said the Fleming, "this is even what I feared! We must e'en render up the castle, or restore to the Welchman, Jorworth, the cattle, by means of which I had schemed to victual and defend it."

"How—wherefore—what doest thou mean?" said the monk, in astonishment. "I speak to thee of Rose Flammock, and Jan Van-devil, or whatever you call him, and you reply with talk about cattle and castles, and I wot not what!"

"So please you, holy father, I did but speak in parables. This castle was the daughter I had promised to deliver over—the Welchman is Jan Vanwelt, and the guilders were the cattle he has sent in, as a part-payment before-hand of my guerdon."

"Parables!" said the monk, colouring with anger at the trick put on him; "what has a boor like thee to do with parables?—But I forgive thee—I forgive thee."

"I am therefore to yield the castle to the Welchman, or restore him his cattle?" said the impenetrable Dutchman.

"Sooner yield thy soul to Satan!" replied the monk.

"I fear me it must be the alternative," said the Fleming; "for the example of thy honourable lord——"

"The example of an honourable fool—" answered the monk; then presently subjoined, "Our Lady be with her servant!—this Belgic-brained boor makes me forget what I would say."

"Nay, but the holy text which your reverence cited to me even now," continued the Fleming.

"Go to," said the monk; "what hast thou to do to presume to think of texts?—knowest thou not that the letter of the Scripture slayeth, and that it is the exposition which maketh to live?—Art thou not like one who, coming to a physician, conceals from him half the symptoms of the dis-

ease?—I tell thee, thou foolish Fleming, the text speaketh but of promises made unto Christians, and there is in the Rubric a special exception of such as are made to Welchmen." At this commentary the Fleming grinned so broadly as to shew his whole case of broad strong white teeth. Father Aldrovand himself grinned in sympathy, and then proceeded to say,—"Come, come, I see how it is. Thou hast studied some small revenge on me for doubting of thy truth; and, in verity, I think thou hast taken it wittily enough. But wherefore didst thou not let me into the secret from the beginning? I promise thee I had foul suspicions of thee."

"What!" said the Fleming, "is it possible I could ever think of involving your reverence in a little matter of deceit? Surely Heaven hath sent me more grace and manners.—Hark, I hear Jorworth's horn at the gate."

"He blows like a town swine-herd," said Aldrovand, in disdain.

"It is not your reverence's pleasure that I should restore the cattle unto him, then?" said Flammock.

"Yes, thus far. Pr'ythee deliver him straight way over the walls such a tub of boiling water as shall scald the hair from his goat-skin cloak. And, hark thee, do thou, in the first place, try the temperature of the kettle with thy fore-finger, and that shall be thy penance for the trick thou hast played me."

The Fleming answered this with another broad grin of intelligence, and they proceeded to the outer gate, to which Jorworth had come alone. Placing himself at the wicket, which, however, he kept carefully barred, and speaking through a small opening, contrived for such purpose, Wilkin Flammock demanded of the Welchman his business.

"To receive rendition of the castle, agreeable to promise," said Jorworth.

"Ay? and art thou come on such an errand alone?" said Wilkin.

"No, truly," answered Jorworth; "I have some two score of men concealed among yonder bushes."

"Then thou hadst best lead them away quick-

ly," answered Wilkin, "before our archers let fly a sheaf of arrows among them."

"How, villain! Dost thou not mean to keep thy promise?" said the Welchman.

"I gave thee none," said the Fleming; "I promised but to think on what thou didst say. I have done so, and have communicated with my ghostly father, who will in no respect hear of my listening to thy proposal."

"And wilt thou," said Jorworth, "keep the cattle, which I simply sent in to the castle on the faith of our agreement?"

"I will excommunicate and deliver him over to Satan," said the monk, unable to wait the phlegmatic and lingering answer of the Fleming, "if he give horn, hoof, or hair of them, to such an uncircumcised Philistine as thou or thy master."

"It is well, shorn priest," answered Jorworth, in great anger. "But mark me—reckon not on your frock for ransom. When Gwenwyn hath taken this castle, as it shall not longer shelter such a pair of faithless traitors, I will have ye

sewed up each into the carcase of one of these kine, for which your penitent has forsworn himself, and lay you where wolf and eagle shall be your only companions."

"Thou wilt work thy will when it is matched with thy power," said the sedate Netherlander.

"False Welchman, we defy thee to thy teeth!" answered, in the same breath, the more irascible monk. "I trust to see the hounds gnaw thy joints ere that day come that ye talk of so proudly."

By way of answer to both, Jorworth drew back his arm with his levelled javelin, and shaking the shaft till it acquired a vibratory motion, he hurled it with equal strength and dexterity right against the aperture in the wicket. It whizzed through the opening at which it was aimed, and flew (harmlessly, however,) between the heads of the monk and the Fleming; the former of whom started back, while the latter only said, as he looked at the javelin, which stood quivering in the door of the guard-room, "That was well aimed, and happily baulked."

Jorworth, the instant he had flung his dart,

hastened to the ambush which he had prepared, and gave them at once the signal and the example of a rapid retreat down the hill. Father Aldrovand would willingly have followed them with a volley of arrows, but the Fleming observed that ammunition was too precious with them to be wasted on a few run-aways. Perhaps he remembered that they had come within the danger of such a salutation, in some measure, on his own assurance.

When the noise of the hasty retreat of Jorworth and his followers had died away, there ensued a dead silence, well corresponding with the coolness and calmness of that early hour in the morning.

"This will not last long," said Wilkin to the monk, in a tone of foreboding seriousness, which found an echo in the good father's bosom.

"It will not, and it cannot," answered Aldrovand; "and we must expect a shrewd attack, which I should mind little, but that their numbers are great, ours few; the extent of the walls considerable, and the obstinacy of these Welch fiends almost equal to their fury. But we will do

the best. I will to the Lady Eveline—She must shew herself upon the battlements—She is fairer in feature than becometh a man of my order to speak of; and she has withal a breathing of her father's lofty spirit. The look and the word of such a lady will give a man double strength in the hour of need."

"It may be," said the Fleming; "and I will go see that the good breakfast which I have appointed be presently served forth; it will give my Flemings more strength than the sight of the ten thousand virgins—may their help be with us!—were they all arranged on a fair field."

CHAPTER VIII.

'Twas when ye raised, 'mid sap and siege,
The banner of your rightful liege
At your she captain's call,
Who, miracle of womankind,
Lent mettle to the meanest hind
That mann'd her castle wall.

WILLIAM STEWART ROSE.

THE morning light was scarce fully spread abroad, when Eveline Berenger, in compliance with her confessor's advice, commenced her progress around the walls and battlements of the beleaguered castle, to confirm, by her personal entreaties, the minds of the valiant, and to rouse the more timid to hope and to exertion. She wore a rich collar and bracelets, as ornaments which indicated her rank and high descent; and her under tunic, in the manner of the times, was gathered around her slender waist by a girdle, embroidered with precious stones, and secured

by a large buckle of gold. From one side of the girdle was suspended a pouch or purse, splendidly adorned with needle-work, and on the left side it sustained a small dagger of exquisite workmanship. A dark-coloured mantle, chosen as emblematic of her clouded fortunes, was flung loosely around her; and its hood was brought forward, so as to shadow, but not hide, her beautiful countenance. Her looks had lost the high and ecstatic expression which had been inspired by supposed revelation, but they retained a sorrowful and mild, yet determined character—and, in addressing the soldiers, she used a mixture of entreaty and command—now throwing herself upon their protection—now demanding in her aid the just tribute of their allegiance.

The garrison was divided, as military skill dictated, in groups, on the points most liable to attack, or from which an assailing enemy might be best annoyed; and it was this unavoidable separation of their force into small detachments, which shewed to disadvantage the extent of walls, compared with the number of the defenders; and though Wilkin Flammock had contrived several

means of concealing this deficiency of force from the enemy, he could not disguise it from the defenders of the castle, who cast mournful glances on the length of battlements which were unoccupied save by sentinels, and then looked out to the fatal field of battle, loaded with the bodies of those who ought to have been their comrades in this hour of peril.

The presence of Eveline did much to rouse the garrison from this state of discouragement. She glided from post to post, from tower to tower of the old grey fortress, as a gleam of light passes over a clouded landscape, and, touching its various points in succession, calls them out into beauty and effect. Sorrow and fear sometimes make sufferers eloquent. She addressed the various nations who composed her little garrison, each in appropriate language. To the English, she spoke as children of the soil—to the Flemings, as men who had become denizens by the right of hospitality—to the Normans, as descendants of that victorious race, whose sword had made them the nobles and sovereigns of every land where its edge had been tried. To them

she used the language of chivalry, by whose rules the meanest of that nation regulated, or affected to regulate, his actions. The English she reminded of their good faith and honesty of heart; and to the Flemings she spoke of the destruction of their property, the fruits of their honest industry. To all she proposed vengeance for the death of their leader and his followers—to all she recommended confidence in God and Our Lady of the Garde Doloureuse; and she ventured to assure all, of the strong and victorious bands that were already in march to their relief.

"Will the gallant champions of the cross," she said, "think of leaving their native land, while the wail of women and of orphans is in their ears? —it were to convert their pious purpose into mortal sin, and to derogate from the high fame they have so well won. Yes—fight but valiantly, and perhaps, before the very sun that is now slowly rising shall sink in the sea, you will see it shining on the ranks of Shrewsbury and Chester. When did the Welchmen wait to hear the clangour of their trumpets, or the rustling of their silken banners? Fight bravely—fight freely but a while!—

our castle is strong—our munition ample—your hearts are good—your arms are powerful—God is nigh to us, and our friends are not far distant. Fight, then, in the name of all that is good and holy—fight for yourselves, for your wives, for your children, and for your property—and oh! fight for an orphan maiden, who hath no other defenders but what a sense of her sorrows, and the remembrance of her father, may raise up among you!"

Such speeches as these made a powerful impression on the men to whom they were addressed, already hardened, by habits and sentiments, against a sense of danger. The chivalrous Normans swore, on the cross of their swords, they would die to a man ere they would surrender their posts—the blunter Anglo-Saxons cried, "Shame on him who would render up such a lamb as Eveline to a Welch wolf, while he could make her a bulwark with his body!"—Even the cold Flemings caught a spark of the enthusiasm with which the others were animated, and muttered to each other praises of the young lady's beauty, and short but honest resolves to do the best they might in her defence.

Rose Flammock, who accompanied her lady with one or two attendants upon her circuit around the castle, seemed to have relapsed into her natural character of a shy and timid girl, out of the excited state into which she had been brought by the suspicions which in the evening before had attached to her father's character. She tripped closely but respectfully after Eveline, and listened to what she said from time to time, with the awe and admiration of a child listening to its tutor, while only her moistened eye expressed how far she felt or comprehended the extent of the danger or the force of the exhortations. There was, however, a moment when the youthful maiden's eye became more bright, her step more confident, her looks more elevated. This was when they approached the spot where her father, having discharged the duties of commander of the garrison, was now exercising those of engineer, and displaying great skill, as well as wonderful personal strength, in directing and assisting the establishment of a large mangonel, (a military engine used for casting stones,) upon a station

commanding an exposed postern-gate, which led from the western side of the castle down to the plain; and where a severe assault was naturally to be expected. The greater part of his armour lay beside him, but covered with his cassock to screen it from morning dew; while in his leathern doublet, with arms bare to the shoulder, and a huge sledge-hammer in his hand, he set an example to the mechanics who worked under his direction.

In slow and solid natures there is usually a touch of shamefacedness, and a sensitiveness to the breach of petty observances. Wilkin Flammock had been unmoved even to insensibility at the imputation of treason so lately cast upon him; but he coloured high, and was confused, while, hastily throwing on his cassock, he endeavoured to conceal the dishabille in which he had been surprised by the Lady Eveline. Not so his daughter. Proud of her father's zeal, her eye gleamed from him to her mistress with a look of triumph, which seemed to say, "And this faithful follower is he who was suspected of treachery?"

Eveline's own bosom made her the same re-

proach; and anxious to atone for her momentary doubt of his fidelity, she offered for his acceptance a ring of value, "in small amends," she said, "of a momentary misconstruction."

"It needs not, lady," said Flammock, with his usual bluntness, "unless I have the freedom to bestow the gaud on Rose; for I think she was grieved enough at that which moved me little.—as why should it?"

"Dispose of it as thou wilt," said Eveline; "the stone it bears is as true as thine own faith."

Here Eveline paused, and looking on the broad expanded plain which extended between the site of the castle and the river, observed how silent and still the morning was rising over what had so lately been a scene of such extensive slaughter.

"It will not be so long," answered Flammock; "we shall have noise enough, and that nearer to our ears than yesterday."

"Which way lie the enemy?" said Eveline; "methinks I can spy neither tents nor pavilions."

"They use none, lady," answered Wilkin Flammock. "Heaven has denied them the grace

and knowledge to weave linen enough for such a purpose—Yonder they lie on both sides of the river, covered with nought but their white mantles. Would one think that a host of thieves and cut-throats could look so like the finest object in nature—a well-spread bleaching-field?—Hark—hark!—the wasps are beginning to buzz; they will soon be plying their stings."

In fact, there was heard among the Welch army a low and indistinct murmur, like that of

> Bees alarm'd, and arming in their hives.

Terrified at the hollow menacing sound, which grew louder every moment, Rose, who had all the irritability of a sensitive temperament, clung to her father's arm, saying, in a terrified whisper, "It is like the sound of the sea the night before the great inundation."

"And it betokens too rough weather for women to be abroad in," said Flammock. "Go to your chamber, Lady Eveline, if it be your will—and go you too, Roschen—God bless thee—ye do but keep us idle here."

And, indeed, conscious that she had done all

that was incumbent upon her, and fearful lest the chill which she felt creeping over her own heart should infect others, Eveline took her vassal's advice, and withdrew slowly to her own apartment, often casting back her eye to the place where the Welch, now drawn out and under arms, were advancing their ridgy battalions, like the waves of an approaching tide.

The Prince of Powis had, with considerable military skill, adopted a plan of attack suitable to the fiery genius of his followers, and calculated to alarm on every point the feeble garrison.

The three sides of the castle which were defended by the river, were watched each by a numerous body of the British, with instructions to confine themselves to the discharge of arrows, unless they should observe that some favourable opportunity of close attack should occur. But far the greater part of Gwenwyn's forces, consisting of three columns of great strength, advanced along the plain on the western side of the castle, and menaced, with a desperate assault, the walls, which, in that direction, were deprived of the defence of the river. The first of these formidable bodies con-

sisted entirely of archers, who dispersed themselves in front of the beleaguered place, and took advantage of every bush and rising ground which could afford them shelter; and then began to bend their bows and shower their arrows on the battlements and loop-holes, suffering, however, a great deal more damage than they were able to inflict, as the garrison returned their shot in comparative safety, and with more secure deliberation. Under cover, however, of their discharge of arrows, two very strong bodies of Welch attempted to carry the outer defences of the castle by storm. They had axes to destroy the palisades, then called barriers; faggots to fill up the external ditches; torches to set fire to aught combustible which they might find; and, above all, ladders to scale the walls.

These detachments rushed with incredible fury towards the point of attack, despite a most obstinate defence, and the great loss which they sustained by missiles of every kind, and continued the assault for nearly an hour, supplied by reinforcements which more than recruited their diminished numbers. When they were at length com-

pelled to retreat, they seemed to adopt a new and yet more harassing species of attack. A large body assaulted one exposed point of the fortress with such fury as to draw thither as many of the besieged as could possibly be spared from other defended posts, and when there appeared a point less strongly manned than was adequate to defence, that in its turn was furiously assailed by a separate body of the enemy.

Thus the defenders of the Garde Doloureuse resembled the embarrassed traveller engaged in repelling a swarm of hornets, who, while he brushes them from one part, fix in swarms upon another, and drive him to despair by their numbers, and the boldness and multiplicity of their attacks. The postern, being of course a principal point of attack, Father Aldrovand, whose anxiety would not permit him to be absent from the walls, and who, indeed, where decency would permit, took an occasional share in the active defence of the place, hasted thither as the point chiefly in danger.

Here he found the Fleming, like a second Ajax, grim with dust and blood, working with his own hands the great engine which he had lately help-

ed to erect, and at the same time giving heedful eye to all the exigencies around.

"How thinkest thou of this day's work?" said the monk in a whisper.

"What skills it talking of it, father?" replied Flammock; "thou art no soldier, and I have no time for words."

"Nay, take thy breath," said the monk, tucking up the sleeves of his frock; "I will try to help thee the whilst—although, Our Lady pity me, I know nothing of these strange devices,—not even the names. But our rule commands us to labour; there can be no harm, therefore, in turning this winch—or in placing this steel-headed piece of wood opposite to the cord, (suiting his action to his words,) nor see I aught uncanonical in adjusting the lever thus, or in touching this spring."

The large bolt whizzed through the air as he spoke, and was so successfully aimed, that it struck down a Welch chief of eminence, to whom Gwenwyn himself was in the act of giving some important charge.

"Well done, *trebuchet*—well flown, *quarrell!*" cried the monk, unable to contain his delight,

and giving, in his triumph, the technical names to the engine, and the javelin which it discharged.

"And well aimed, monk," added Wilkin Flammock; "I think thou knowest more than is in thy breviary."

"Care not thou for that," said the father; "and now that thou seest I can work an engine, and that the knaves seem something low in stomach, what think'st thou of our estate?"

"Well enough—for a bad one—if we may hope for speedy succour; but men's bodies are of flesh, not of iron, and we may be at last wearied out by numbers. Only one soldier to four yards of wall, is a fearful odds; and the villains are aware of it, and keep us to sharp work."

The renewal of the assault here broke off their conversation, nor did the active enemy permit them to enjoy much repose until sunset; for, alarming them with repeated menaces of attack upon different points, besides making two or three formidable and furious assaults upon different points, they left them scarce time to breathe, or to take a moment's refreshment. Yet the Welch paid

a severe price for their temerity; for, while nothing could exceed the bravery with which their men repeatedly advanced to the attack, those which were made latest in the day had less of animated desperation than their first onset; and it is probable, that the sense of having sustained great loss, and apprehension of its effects on the spirits of his people, made nightfall, and the interruption of the contest, as acceptable to Gwenwyn as to the exhausted garrison of the Garde Doloureuse.

But in the camp or leaguer of the Welch there was glee and triumph, for the loss of the past day was forgotten in recollection of the signal victory which had preceded this siege; and the dispirited garrison could hear from their walls the laugh and the song, the sound of harping and gaiety, which triumphed by anticipation over their surrender.

The sun was for some time sunk, the twilight deepened, and night closed with a blue and cloudless sky, in which the thousand spangles that deck the firmament received double brilliancy from some slight touch of frost, although the paler planet, their mistress, was but in her first quarter.

The necessities of the garrison were considerably aggravated by that of keeping a very strong and watchful guard, ill according with the weakness of their numbers, at a time which appeared favourable to any sudden nocturnal alarm; and, so urgent was this duty, that those who had been more slightly wounded on the preceding day, were obliged to take their share in it, notwithstanding their hurts. The monk and Fleming, who now perfectly understood each other, went in company around the walls at midnight, exhorting the warders to be watchful, and examining with their own eyes the state of the fortress. It was in the course of these rounds, and as they were ascending an elevated platform by a range of narrow and uneven steps, something galling to the monk's tread, that they perceived on the summit to which they were ascending, instead of the black corslet of the Flemish sentinel who had been placed there, two white forms, the appearance of which struck Wilkin Flammock with more dismay than he had shewn during any of the doubtful events of the preceding day's fight.

"Father," he said, "betake yourself to your tools—*es spuct*—there are hobgoblins here."

The good father had not learned as a priest to defy the spiritual host, whom, as a soldier, he had dreaded more than any mortal enemy; but he began to recite with chattering teeth, the exorcism of the church, "*Conjuro vos omnes, spiritus maligni, magni, atque parvi*,"—when he was interrupted by the voice of Eveline who called out, "Is it you, Father Aldrovand?"

Much lightened at heart by finding they had no ghost to deal with, Wilkin Flammock and the priest advanced hastily to the platform, where they found the lady with her faithful Rose, the former with a half pike in her hand, like a sentinel on duty.

"How is this, daughter?" said the Monk; "how came you here, and thus armed? and where is the sentinel,—the lazy Flemish hound, that should have kept the post?"

"May he not be a lazy hound, yet not a Flemish one, father?" said Rose, who was ever awakened by anything which seemed a reflection upon

her country; "methinks, I have heard of such curs of English breed."

"Go to, Rose, you are too malapert for a young maiden," said her father. "Once more, where is Peterkin Vorst, who should have kept this post?"

"Let him not be blamed for my fault," said Eveline, pointing to a place where the Flemish sentinel lay in the shade of the battlement fast asleep.—"He was overcome with toil—had fought hard through the day, and when I saw him asleep as I came hither, like a wandering spirit that cannot take slumber or repose, I would not disturb the rest which I envied. As he had fought for me, I might, I thought, watch an hour for him; so I took his weapon with the purpose of remaining here till some one should come to relieve him."

"I will relieve the schelm, with a vengeance!" said Wilkin Flammock, and saluted the slumbering and prostrate warder with two kicks, which made his corslet clatter. The man started to his feet in no small alarm, which he would have communicated to the next sentinels and to the whole garrison, by crying out that the Welch were upon the walls, had not the monk covered his broad

mouth with his hand just as the roar was issuing forth.—"Peace, and get thee down to the under bayley," said he;—"thou deservest death, by all the policies of war—but, look ye, varlet, and see who has saved your worthless neck, by watching while you were dreaming of swine's flesh and beer-pots."

The Fleming, although as yet but half awake, was sufficiently conscious of his situation, to sneak off without reply, after two or three awkward congees, as well to Eveline as to those by whom his repose had been so unceremoniously interrupted.

"He deserves to be tied neck and heel, the houndsfoot," said Wilkin. "But what would you have, lady? My countrymen cannot live without rest or sleep." So saying, he gave a yawn so wide as if he had proposed to swallow one of the turrets that garnished an angle of the platform on which he stood.

"True, good Wilkin," said Eveline; "and do you therefore take some rest, and trust to my watchfulness, at least till the guards are relieved. I cannot sleep if I would, and I would not if I could.

"Thanks, lady," said Flammock; "and in truth, as this is a centrical place, and the rounds must pass in an hour at farthest, I will e'en close my eyes for such a space, for the lids feel as heavy as flood-gates."

"O, father, father!" exclaimed Rose, alive to her sire's unceremonious neglect of decorum—"think where you are, and in whose presence!"

"Ay, ay, good Flammock," said the monk, "remember the presence of a noble Norman maiden is no place for folding of cloaks and donning of nightcaps."

"Let him alone, father," said Eveline, who in another moment might have smiled at the readiness with which Wilkin Flammock folded himself in his huge cloak, extended his substantial form on the stone bench, and gave the most decided tokens of profound repose, long ere the monk had done speaking.—"Forms and fashions of respect," she continued, "are for times of ease and nicety;—when in danger, the soldier's bed-chamber is wherever he can find leisure for an hour's sleep—his eating-hall, wherever he can ob-

tain food. Sit thou down by Rose and me, good father, and tell us of some holy lesson which may pass away these hours of weariness and calamity."

The father obeyed; but, however willing to afford consolation, his ingenuity and theological skill suggested nothing better than a recitation of the penitentiary psalms, in which task he continued until fatigue became too powerful for him also, when he committed the same breach of decorum for which he had upbraided Wilkin Flammock, and fell fast asleep in the midst of his devotions.

CHAPTER IX.

"O night of woe," she said, and wept,
"O night foreboding sorrow!
O night of woe," she said, and wept,
"But more I dread the morrow."

SIR GILBERT ELLIOT.

THE fatigue which had exhausted Flammock and the monk, was unfelt by the two anxious maidens, who remained with their eyes bent now upon the dim landscape, now on the stars by which it was lighted, as if they could have read there the events which the morrow was to bring forth. It was a placid and melancholy scene. Tree and field, and hill and plain, lay before them in doubtful light, while, at greater distance, their eye could with difficulty trace one or two places where the river, hidden in general by banks and trees, spread its more expanded bosom to the stars,

and the pale crescent. All was still, excepting the solemn rush of the waters, and now and then the shrill tinkle of a harp, which, heard from more than a mile's distance through the midnight silence, announced that some of the Welchmen still protracted their most beloved amusement. The wild notes, partially heard, seemed like the voice of some passing spirit; and, connected as they were with ideas of fierce and unrelenting hostility, thrilled on Eveline's ear, as if prophetic of war and woe, captivity and death. The only other sounds which disturbed the extreme stillness of the night, was the occasional step of a sentinel upon his post, or the hooting of the owls, which seemed to wail the approaching downfall of the moon-light turrets, in which they had established their ancient habitations.

The calmness of all around seemed to press like a weight on the bosom of the unhappy Eveline, and brought to her bosom a deeper sense of present grief, and keener fear of future horrors, than had reigned there during the bustle, blood, and confusion of the preceding day. She rose up—she sat down—she moved to and fro on the plat-

form—she remained fixed like a statue to a single spot, as if she were trying by variety of posture to divert her internal sense of fear and sorrow.

At length, looking at the monk and the Fleming as they slept soundly under the shade of the battlement, she could no longer forbear breaking silence. "Men are happy," she said, "my beloved Rose; their anxious thoughts are either diverted by toilsome exertion, or drowned in the insensibility which follows it. They may encounter wounds and death, but it is we who feel in the spirit a more keen anguish than the body knows, and in the gnawing sense of present ill and fear of future misery, a living death, more cruel than that which ends our woes at once."

"Do not be thus downcast, my noble lady," said Rose; "be rather what you were yesterday, caring for the wounded, for the aged, for every one but yourself—exposing even your dear life among the showers of the Welch arrows, when doing so could give courage to others; while I—shame on me—could but tremble, sob, and weep, and needed all the little wit I have to prevent my shouting with the wild cries of the Welch, or screaming and

groaning with those of our friends who fell around me."

"Alas! Rose," answered her mistress, "you may at pleasure indulge your fears to the verge of distraction itself—you have a father to fight and watch for you. Mine—my kind, noble, and honoured parent, lies dead on yonder field, and all which remains for me is to act as may best become his memory. But, this moment is at least mine, to think upon and to mourn for him."

So saying, and overpowered by the long-repressed burst of filial sorrow, she sunk down on the banquette which ran along the inside of the embattled parapet of the platform, and murmuring to herself, "He is gone for ever!" abandoned herself to the extremity of grief. One hand grasped unconsciously the weapon which she held, and served, at the same time, to prop her forehead, while the tears, by which she was now for the first time relieved, flowed in torrents from her eyes, and her sobs seemed so convulsive, that Rose almost feared her heart was bursting. Her affection and sympathy dictated at once the kindest course which Eveline's condition permitted. Without

attempting to control the torrent of grief in its full current, she gently sat her down beside the mourner, and possessing herself of the hand which had sunk motionless by her side, she alternately pressed it to her lips, her bosom, and her brow—now covered it with kisses, now bedewed it with tears, and amid these tokens of the most devoted and humble sympathy, waited a more composed moment to offer her little stock of consolation in such deep silence and stillness, that as the pale light fell upon the two beautiful young women, it seemed rather to shew a group of statuary, the work of some eminent sculptor, than beings whose eyes still wept, and whose hearts still throbbed. At a little distance, the gleaming corslet of the Fleming, and the dark garments of Father Aldrovand, as they lay prostrate on the stone steps, might represent the bodies of those for whom the principal figures were mourning.

After a deep agony of many minutes, it seemed that the sorrows of Eveline were assuming a more composed character; her convulsive sobs were changed for long, low, profound sighs, and the course of her tears, though they still flowed, was

milder and less violent. Her kind attendant, availing herself of these gentler symptoms, tried softly to win the spear from her lady's grasp. "Let me be sentinel for a while," she said, "my sweet lady —I will at least scream louder than you, if any danger should approach." She ventured to kiss her cheek and throw her arms around Eveline's neck while she spoke; but a mute caress, which expressed her sense of the faithful girl's kind intentions to minister if possible to her repose, was the only answer returned. They remained for many minutes silent and in the same posture,—Eveline, like an upright and slender poplar,—Rose, who encircled her lady in her arms, like the woodbine which twines around it.

At length Rose suddenly felt her young mistress shiver in her embrace, and that Eveline's hand grasped her own arm rigidly as she whispered, "Do you hear nothing?"

"No—nothing but the hooting of the owl," answered Rose timorously.

"I heard a distant sound," said Eveline,—"I thought I heard it—hark, it comes again—Look from the battlements, Rose, while I awaken the priest and thy father."

"Dearest lady," said Rose, "I dare not—What can this sound be that is heard by one only?—You are deceived by the rush of the river."

"I would not alarm the castle unnecessarily," said Eveline, pausing, "or even break your father's needful slumbers, by a fancy of mine—But hark—hark!—I hear it again—distinct amidst the intermitting sound of the rushing water—a low tremulous sound, mingled with a tinkling like smiths or armourers at work upon their anvils."

Rose had by this time sprung up on the banquette, and flinging back her rich tresses of fair hair, had applied her hand behind her ear to collect the distant sound. "I hear it," she cried, "and it increases—Awake them, for Heaven's sake, and without a moment's delay!"

Eveline accordingly stirred the sleepers with the reversed end of the lance, and as they started to their feet in haste, she whispered, in a hasty but cautious voice, "To arms—the Welch are upon us!"

"What—where?" said Wilkin Flammock,—"where be they?"

"Listen, and you will hear them arming," she replied.

"The noise is but in thine own fancy, lady," said the Fleming, whose organs were of the same heavy character with his form and his disposition. "I would I had not gone to sleep at all, since I was to be awakened so soon."

"Nay, but listen, good Flammock—the sound of armour comes from the north-east."

"The Welch lie not in that quarter, lady," said Wilkin, "and, besides, they wear no armour."

"I hear it—I hear it!" said Father Aldrovand, who had been listening for some time. "All praise to St Benedict!—Our Lady of the Garde Doloureuse has been gracious to her servants as ever!—It is the tramp of horse—it is the clash of armour—the chivalry of the Marches are coming to our relief—Kyrie Eleison!"

"I hear something too," said Flammock,—"something like the hollow sound of the great sea, when it burst into my neighbour Klinkerman's warehouse, and rolled his pots and pans against each other. But it were an evil mistake,

father, to take foes for friends—we were best rouse the people."

"Tush!" said the priest, "talk to me of pots and kettles?—Was I squire of the body to Count Stephen Mauleverer for twenty years, and do I not know the tramp of a war-horse, or the clash of a mail-coat?—But call the men to the walls at any rate, and have me the best drawn up in the base-court—we may help them by a sally."

"That will not be rashly undertaken with my consent," murmured the Fleming; "but to the wall if you will, and in good time. But keep your Normans and English silent, Sir Priest, else their unruly and noisy joy will awaken the Welch camp, and prepare them for their unwelcome visitors."

The monk laid his finger on his lip in sign of intelligence, and they parted in opposite directions, each to rouse the defenders of the castle, who were soon heard drawing from all quarters to their posts upon the walls, with hearts in a very different mood than when they had descended from them. The utmost caution being used to prevent noise, the manning of the walls was accomplished

in silence, and the garrison awaited in breathless expectation the success of the forces who were now rapidly advancing to their relief.

The character of the sounds, which now loudly awakened the silence of this eventful night, could no longer be mistaken. They were distinguishable from the rushing of a mighty river, or from the muttering sound of distant thunder, by the sharp and angry notes which the clashing of the riders' arms mingled with the deep bass of the horses' rapid tread. From the long continuance of the sounds, their loudness, and the extent of horizon from which they seemed to come, all in the castle were satisfied that the approaching relief consisted of several very strong bodies of horse. At once this mighty sound ceased, as if the earth on which they trod had either devoured the armed squadrons, or had become incapable of resounding to their tramp. The defenders of the Garde Doloureuse concluded that their friends had made a sudden halt, to give their horses breath, examine the leaguer of the enemy, and settle the order of the attack upon them. The pause, however, was but momentary.

The British, so alert at surprising their enemies, were themselves, on many occasions, liable to surprise. Their men were undisciplined, and sometimes negligent of the patient duties of a sentinel; and, besides, their foragers and flying parties, who scoured the country during the preceding day, had brought back to the main body tidings which had lulled them into fatal security. Their camp had been therefore negligently guarded, and they had altogether neglected the important military duty of establishing patroles and outposts at a proper distance from their main body. Thus the cavalry of the Lords Marchers, notwithstanding the noise which accompanied their advance, had approached very near the British camp, without exciting the least alarm. But while they were arranging their forces into separate columns, in order to commence the assault, a loud and increasing noise among the Welch announced that they were at length aware of their danger. The shrill and discordant cries by which they endeavoured to assemble their men, each under the banner of his chief, resounded from their leaguer.

But these rallying shouts were soon converted into screams and clamours of horror and dismay, when the thundering charge of the barbed horses and heavily armed cavalry of the Anglo-Normans surprised their undefended camp.

Yet not even under circumstances so adverse did the descendants of the ancient Britons renounce their defence, or forfeit their old hereditary privilege, to be called the bravest of mankind. Their cries of defiance and resistance were heard resounding above the groans of the wounded, the shouts of the triumphant assailants, and the universal tumult of the night-battle. It was not until the morning light began to peep forth, that the slaughter or dispersion of Gwenwyn's forces were complete, and that the "earthquake voice of victory" arose in uncontrolled and unmingled energy of exultation.

Then the besieged, if they could be still so termed, looking from their towers over the expanded country beneath, witnessed nothing but one wide-spread scene of desultory flight and unrelaxed pursuit. That the Welch had been per-

mitted to encamp in fancied security upon the hither side of the river, now rendered their discomfiture more dreadfully fatal. The single pass by which they could cross to the other side was soon completely choked by fugitives, on whose rear raged the swords of the victorious Normans. Many threw themselves into the river, upon the precarious chance of gaining the farther side, and, excepting a few who were uncommonly strong, skilful, and active, perished among the rocks and in the currents; others more fortunate escaped by obscure and secret fords; many dispersed, or, in small bands, fled in reckless despair towards the castle, as if the fortress, which had beat them off when victorious, could be a place of refuge to them in their present forlorn condition; while others roamed wildly over the plain, seeking only escape from immediate and instant danger, without knowing whither they ran.

The Normans, meanwhile, divided into small parties, followed and slaughtered them at pleasure; while, as a rallying point for the victors, the banner of Hugo de Lacy streamed from a small mount, on which Gwenwyn had lately pitch-

ed his own, and surrounded by a competent force, both of infantry and horsemen, which the experienced Baron permitted on no account to wander far from it.

The rest, as we have already said, followed the chase with shouts of exultation and of vengeance, ringing around the battlements, which resounded with the cries, "Ha, Saint Edward!—Ha, Saint Dennis!—Strike—slay—no quarter to the Welch wolves—think on Raymond Berenger!"

The soldiers on the walls joined in these vengeful and victorious clamours, and discharged several sheafs of arrows upon such fugitives, as, in their extremity, approached too near the castle. They would fain have sallied to give more active assistance in the work of destruction, but the communication being now open with the Constable of Chester's forces, Wilkin Flammock considered himself and the garrison to be under the orders of that renowned chief, and refused to listen to the eager admonitions of Father Aldrovand, who would, notwithstanding his sacerdotal character, have willingly himself taken charge of the sally which he proposed.

At length the scene of slaughter seemed concluded—the retreat was blown on many a bugle, and knights halted on the plain to collect their personal followers, muster them under their proper pennon, and then led them slowly back to the great standard of their leader, around which the main body were again to be assembled, like the clouds which gather around the evening sun —a fanciful simile, which might yet be drawn farther, in respect of the level rays of strong lurid light which shot from these dark battalions, as the beams were flung back from their polished armour.

The plain was in this manner soon cleared of the horsemen, and remained only occupied by the dead bodies of the slaughtered Welchmen. The bands who had followed the pursuit to a greater distance were also now seen returning, driving before them, or dragging after them, dejected and unhappy captives, to whom they had given quarter when their thirst of blood was satiated.

It was then that, desirous to attract the attention of his liberators, Wilkin Flammock com-

manded all the banners of the castle to be displayed, under a general shout of acclamation from those who had fought under them. It was answered by an universal cry of joy from De Lacy's army, which rung so wide, as might even yet have startled such of the Welch fugitives, as, far distant from this disastrous field of flight, might have ventured to halt for a moment's repose.

Presently after this greeting had been exchanged, a single horseman advanced from the Constable's army towards the castle, shewing, even at a distance, an unusual dexterity of horsemanship and grace of deportment. He arrived at the drawbridge, which was instantly lowered to receive him, whilst Flammock and the monk, (for the latter, as far as he could, associated himself with the former in all acts of authority,) hastened to receive the envoy of their liberator. They found him just alighted from the raven-coloured horse, which was slightly flecked with blood as well as foam, and still panted with the exertions of the evening; though, answering to the caressing hand of his youthful rider, he arched his neck,

shook his steel caparison, and snorted to announce his unabated mettle and unwearied love of combat. The young man's eagle look bore the same token of unabated vigour, mingled with the signs of recent exertion. His helmet hanging at his saddle-bow, shewed a gallant countenance, coloured highly, but not inflamed, which looked out from a rich profusion of short chesnut curls; and although his armour was of a massive and simple form, he moved under it with such elasticity and ease, that it seemed a graceful attire, not a burthen or incumbrance. A furred mantle had not sat on him with more easy grace than the heavy hauberk which complied with every gesture of his noble form. Yet his countenance was so juvenile, that only the down on the upper lip announced decisively the approach to manhood. The females, who thronged into the court to see the first envoy of their deliverers, could not forbear mixing praises of his beauty with blessings on his valour; and one comely middle-aged dame, in particular, distinguished by the tightness with which her scarlet hose sat on a well-shaped leg and ancle, and by

the cleanness of her coif, pressed close up to the young squire, and, more forward than the rest, doubled the crimson hue of his cheek, by crying aloud, that Our Lady of the Garde Doloureuse had sent them news of their redemption by an angel from the sanctuary;—a speech which, although Father Aldrovand shook his head, was received by her companions with such general acclamation, as greatly embarrassed the young man's modesty.

"Peace, all of ye," said Wilkin Flammock—"know you no respects, you women, or have you never seen a young gentleman before, that you hang on him like flies on a honey-comb? Stand aback, I say, and let us hear in peace what are the commands of the noble Lord of Lacy."

"These," said the young man, "I can only deliver in the presence of the right noble demoiselle, Eveline Berenger, if I may be thought worthy of such honour."

"That thou art, noble sir," said the same forward dame who had before expressed her admiration so energetically; "I will uphold thee worthy

of her presence, and whatever other grace a lady can do thee."

"Now hold thy tongue, with a wanion," said the monk; while in the same breath the Fleming exclaimed, "Beware the cucking-stool, Dame Scant o' Grace," while he conducted the noble youth across the court.

"Let my good horse be cared for," said the gentleman, as he put the bridle into the hand of a menial; and in doing so got rid of some part of his female retinue, who began to pat and praise the horse as much as they had done the rider; and some, in the enthusiasm of their joy, hardly abstained from kissing the stirrups and horse furniture.

But Dame Gillian was not so easily diverted from her own point as were some of her companions. She continued to repeat the word, *cucking-stool*, till the Fleming was out of hearing, and then became more specific in her objurgation.—"And why cucking-stool, I pray, Sir Wilkin Butterfirken? You are the man would stop an English mouth with a Flemish damask napkin, I

trow! Marry quep, my cousin the weaver! And why the cucking-stool, I pray?—because my young lady is comely, and the young squire is a man of mettle, reverence to his beard that is to come yet? Have we not eyes to see, and have we not a mouth and a tongue?"

"In troth, Dame Gillian, they do you wrong who doubt it," said Eveline's nurse, who stood by; "but, I pr'ythee, keep it shut now, were it but for womanhood."

"How now, mannerly Mrs Margery?" replied the incorrigible Gillian; "Is your heart so high because you dandled our young lady on your knee fifteen years since?—Let me tell you the cat will find its way to the cream, though it was brought up on an abbess's lap."

"Home, housewife—home," exclaimed her husband, the old huntsman, who was weary of this public exhibition of his domestic termagant—"home, or I will give you a taste of my dog-leash—Here are both the confessor and Wilkin Flammock wondering at your impudence."

"Indeed!" replied Gillian; "and are not

two fools enough for wonderment, that you must come with your grave pate to make up the number three?"

There was a general laugh at the huntsman's expense, under cover of which he prudently withdrew his spouse, without attempting to continue the war of tongues, in which she had shewn such a decided superiority.

This controversy, so light is the change in human spirits, especially among the lower class, awakened bursts of idle mirth among beings who had so lately been in the jaws of danger, if not of absolute despair.

CHAPTER X.

They bore him bare-faced on his bier,
Six proper youths and tall,
And many a tear bedew'd his grave
Within yon kirk-yard wall.
The Friar of Orders Gray.

While these matters took place in the castle-yard, the young squire, Damian Lacy, obtained the audience which he had requested of Eveline Berenger, who received him in the great hall of the castle, seated beneath the dais, or canopy, and waited upon by Rose, and other female attendants; of whom the first alone was permitted to use a tabouret, or small stool, in her presence, so strict were the Norman maidens of quality in maintaining their claims to high rank and observance.

The youth was introduced by the confessor and Flammock, as the spiritual character of the one,

and the trust reposed by her late father in the other, authorised them to be present upon the occasion. Eveline naturally blushed, as she advanced two steps to receive the handsome youthful envoy; and her bashfulness seemed infectious, for it was with some confusion that Damian went through the ceremony of saluting the hand which she extended towards him in token of welcome. Eveline was under the necessity of speaking first.

"We advance as far as our limits will permit us," she said, "to greet with our thanks the messenger who brings us tidings of safety. We speak —unless we err—to the noble Damian of Lacy."

"To the humblest of your servants," answered Damian, falling with some difficulty into the tone of courtesy which his errand and character required, "who approaches you on behalf of his noble uncle, Hugo de Lacy, Constable of Chester."

"Will not our noble deliverer in person honour with his presence the poor dwelling which he has saved?"

"My noble kinsman," answered Damian, "is now God's soldier, and bound by a vow not to

come beneath a roof until he embark for the Holy-Land. But by my voice he congratulates you on the defeat of your savage enemies, and sends you these tokens that the comrade and friend of your noble father hath not left his lamentable death many hours unavenged." So saying, he drew forth and laid before Eveline the gold bracelets, and the Eudorchawg, or chain of linked gold, which had distinguished the rank of the Welch Prince.

"Gwenwyn hath then fallen?" said Eveline, a natural shudder combating with the feelings of gratified vengeance, as she beheld that the trophies were specked with blood,—"The slayer of my father is no more!"

"My kinsman's lance transfixed the Briton as he endeavoured to rally his flying people—he died grimly on the weapon which had passed more than a fathom through his body, and exerted his last strength in a furious but ineffectual blow with his mace."

"Heaven is just," said Eveline; "may his sins be forgiven to the man of blood, since he hath

fallen by a death so bloody!—One question I would ask you, noble sir. My father's remains—" She paused, unable to proceed.

"An hour will place them at your disposal, most honoured lady," replied the squire, in the tone of sympathy which the sorrows of so young and so fair an orphan called irresistibly forth. "Such preparations as time admitted were making even when I left the host, to transport what was mortal of the noble Berenger from the field on which we found him, amid a monument of slain which his own sword had raised. My kinsman's vow will not allow him to pass your portcullis; but, with your permission, I will represent him, if such be your pleasure, at these honoured obsequies, having charge to that effect."

"My brave and noble father," said Eveline, making an effort to restrain her tears, "will be best mourned by the noble and the brave." She would have continued, but her voice failed her, and she was obliged to withdraw abruptly, in order to give vent to her sorrow, and prepare for the funeral rites with such ceremony as circumstances should permit. Damian bowed to the de-

parting mourner as reverently as he would have done to a divinity, and taking his horse, returned to his uncle's host, which had encamped hastily on the recent field of battle.

The sun was now high, and the whole plain presented the appearance of a bustle, equally different from the solitude of the early morning, and from the roar and fury of the subsequent engagement. The news of Hugo de Lacy's victory everywhere spread abroad with all the alacrity of triumph, and had induced many of the inhabitants of the country, who had fled before the fury of the Wolf of Plinlimmon, to return to their desolate habitations. Numbers also of the loose and profligate characters which abound in a country subject to the frequent changes of war, had flocked thither in quest of spoil, or to gratify a spirit of restless curiosity. The Jew and the Lombard, despising danger where there was a chance of gain, might be already seen bartering liquors and wares with the victorious men-at-arms, for the blood-stained ornaments of gold lately worn by the defeated British. Others acted as brokers betwixt the Welch captives and their captors; and

where they could trust the means and good faith of the former, sometimes became bound for, or even advanced in ready money, the sums necessary for their ransom; whilst a more numerous class became themselves the purchasers of those prisoners who had no immediate means of settling with their conquerors.

That the money thus acquired might not long encumber the soldier, or blunt his ardour for farther enterprize, the usual means of dissipating military spoils were already at hand. Courtezans, mimes, jugglers, minstrels, and tale-tellers of every description, had accompanied the night march; and, secure in the military reputation of the celebrated De Lacy, had rested fearlessly at some little distance until the battle was fought and won. These now approached, in many a joyous group, to congratulate the victors. Close to the parties which they formed for the dance, the song, or the tale, upon the yet bloody field, the countrymen, summoned in for the purpose, were opening large trenches for depositing the dead—leeches were seen tending the wounded—priests and monks confessing those in extremity—soldiers transporting

from the field the bodies of the more honoured among the slain—peasants mourning over their trampled crops and plundered habitations—and widows and orphans searching for the bodies of husbands and parents, amid the promiscuous carnage of two combats. Thus woe mingled her wildest notes with those of jubilee and bacchanal triumph, and the plain of the Garde Doloureuse formed a singular parallel to the varied maze of human life, where joy and grief are so strangely mingled, and where the confines of mirth and pleasure often border on those of sorrow and of death.

About noon these various noises were at once silenced, and the attention alike of those who rejoiced or who mourned was arrested by the loud and mournful sound of six trumpets, which, uplifting and uniting their thrilling tones in a wild and melancholy death-note, apprized all, that the mournful obsequies of the valiant Raymond Berenger were about to commence. From a tent, which had been hastily pitched for the immediate reception of the body, twelve black monks, the inhabitants of a neighbouring convent, began to

file out in pairs, headed by their abbot, who bore a large cross, and thundered forth the sublime notes of the Catholic *Miserere me, Domine*. Then came a chosen body of men-at-arms, trailing their lances, with their points reversed and pointed to the earth; and after them the body of the valiant Berenger, wrapped in his own knightly banner, which, regained from the hands of the Welch, now served its noble owner instead of a funereal pall. The most valiant knights of the Constable's household (for, like other great nobles of that period, he had formed it upon a scale which approached to that of royalty) walked as mourners and supporters of the corpse, which was borne upon lances; and the Constable of Chester himself, alone and fully armed, excepting the head, followed as chief mourner. A chosen body of squires, men-at-arms, and pages of noble descent, brought up the rear of the procession; while their nakers and trumpets echoed back, from time to time, the melancholy song of the monks, by replying in a note as lugubrious as their own.

The course of pleasure was arrested, and even that of sorrow was for a moment turned from her

own griefs, to witness the last honours bestowed on him, who had been in life the father and guardian of his people.

The mournful procession traversed slowly the plain which had been within a few hours the scene of such varied events; and, pausing before the outer gate of the barricades of the castle, invited, by a prolonged and solemn flourish, the fortress to receive the remains of its late gallant defender. The melancholy summons was answered by the warder's horn—the draw-bridge sunk—the portcullis rose—and Father Aldrovand appeared in the middle of the gateway, arrayed in his sacerdotal habit, whilst a little way behind him stood the orphaned damsel, in such weeds of mourning as time admitted, supported by her attendant Rose, and followed by the females of the household.

The Constable of Chester paused upon the threshold of the outer gate, and, pointing to the cross signed in white cloth upon his left shoulder, with a lowly reverence resigned to his nephew, Damian, the task of attending the remains of Raymond Berenger to the chapel within the castle. The soldiers of Hugo de Lacy, most of whom

were bound by the same vow with himself, also halted without the castle gate, and remained under arms, while the death-peal of the chapel bell announced from within the progress of the procession.

It winded on through those narrow entrances, which were skilfully contrived to interrupt the progress of an enemy, even should he succeed in forcing the outer gate, and arrived at length in the great court-yard, where most of the inhabitants of the fortress, and those who, under recent circumstances, had taken refuge there, were drawn up, in order to look for the last time on their departed lord. Among these were mingled a few of the motley crowd from without, whom curiosity, or the expectation of a dole, had brought to the castle gate, and who, by one argument or other, had obtained from the warders permission to enter the interior.

The body was here set down before the door of the chapel, the ancient Gothic front of which formed one side of the court-yard, until certain prayers were recited by the priests, in which the crowd around were supposed to join with becoming reverence.

It was during this interval, that a man, whose peaked beard, embroidered girdle, and high-crowned hat of grey felt, gave him the air of a Lombard merchant, addressed Margery, the nurse of Eveline, in a whispering tone, and with a foreign accent.—"I am a travelling merchant, good sister, and am come hither in quest of gain—can you tell me whether I can have any custom in this castle?"

"You are come at an evil time, Sir Stranger—you may yourself see that this is a place for mourning, and not for merchandize."

"Yet mourning times have their own commerce," said the stranger, approaching still closer to the side of Margery, and lowering his voice to a tone yet more confidential. "I have sable scarfs of Persian silk—black bugles, in which a princess might mourn for a deceased monarch—cyprus, such as the east hath seldom sent forth—black cloth for mourning hangings—all that may express sorrow and reverence in fashion and attire; and I know how to be grateful to those who help me to custom. Come, bethink you, good dame—such things must be had—I will sell as good ware

and as cheap as another, and a kirtle to yourself, or, at your pleasure, a purse with five florins, shall be the meed of your kindness."

"I prithee peace, friend," said Margery, "and choose a better time for vaunting your wares—you neglect both place and season; and if you be farther importunate, I must speak to those who will shew you the outward side of the castle gate. I marvel the warders would admit pedlars upon a day such as this—they would drive a gainful bargain by the bed-side of their mother, were she dying, I trow." So saying, she turned scornfully from him.

While thus angrily rejected on the one side, the merchant felt his cloak receive an intelligent twitch upon the other, and looking around upon the signal, he saw a dame, whose black kerchief was affectedly disposed, so as to give an appearance of solemnity to a set of light laughing features, which must have been captivating when young, since they retained so many good points when at least forty years must have passed over them. She winked to the merchant, touching at the same time her under lip with her forefinger, to

announce the propriety of silence and secrecy; then gliding from the crowd, retreated to a small recess formed by a projecting buttress of the chapel, as if to avoid the pressure likely to take place at the moment when the bier should be lifted. The merchant failed not to follow her example, and was soon by her side, when she did not give him the trouble of opening his affairs, but commenced the conversation herself. "I have heard what you said to our Dame Margery—Mannerly Margery, as I call her—heard as much at least as led me to guess the rest, for I have got an eye in my head, I promise you."

"A pair of them, my pretty dame, and as bright as drops of dew in a May morning."

"Oh, you say so, because I have been weeping," said the scarlet-hosed Gillian, for it was even herself who spoke; "and to be sure, I have good cause, for our lord was always my very good lord, and would sometimes chuck me under the chin, and call me buxom Gillian of Croydon—not that the good gentleman was ever uncivil, for he would thrust a silver twopennies into

my hand at the same time.—Oh! the friend that I have lost!—And I have had anger on his account too—I have seen old Raoul as sour as vinegar, and fit for no place but the kennel for a whole day about it; but, as I said to him, it was not for the like of me to be affronting our master, and a great baron, about a chuck under the chin, or a kiss, or such like."

"No wonder you are so sorry for so kind a master, dame," said the merchant.

"No wonder indeed," replied the dame with a sigh; "and then what is to become of us?—It is like my young mistress will go to her aunt—or she will marry one of these Lacy's that they talk so much of—or, at any rate, she will leave the castle; and it's like old Raoul and I will be turned to grass with the lord's old chargers. The Lord knows, they may as well hang him up with the old hounds, for he is both footless and fangless, and fit for nothing on earth that I know of."

"Your young mistress is that lady in the mourning mantle," said the merchant, "who so nearly sunk down upon the body just now?"

"In good troth is she, sir—and much cause she has to sink down. I am sure she will be to seek for such another father."

"I see you are a most discerning woman, gossip Gillian," answered the merchant; "and yonder youth that supported her is her bridegroom?"

"Much need she has for some one to support her," said Gillian; "and so have I for that matter, for what can poor old rusty Raoul do?"

"But as to your young lady's marriage?" said the merchant.

"No one knows more, than that such a thing was in treaty between our late lord and the great Constable of Chester, that came to-day but just in time to prevent the Welch from cutting all our throats, and doing the Lord knoweth what mischief beside.—But there is a marriage talked of, that is certain—and most folks think it must be for this smooth-cheeked boy Damian, as they call him; for though the Constable has gotten a beard, it is something too grizzled for a bridegroom's chin—Besides, he goes to the Holy Wars—fittest place for all elderly warriors—I wish he would take Raoul with him.—But what is all this

to what you were saying about your mourning wares even now?—It is a sad truth, that my poor lord is gone—But what then?—Well-a-day, you know the good old saw,—

> Cloth must we wear,
> Eat beef and drink beer,
> Though the dead go to bier.

And for your merchandizing, I am as like to help you with my good word as Mannerly Margery, providing you bid fair for it; since, if the lady loves me not so much, I can turn the steward round my finger."

"Take this in part of your bargain, pretty Mrs Gillian," said the merchant; "and when my wains come up, I will consider you amply, if I get good sale by your favourable report.—But how shall I get into the castle again? for I would wish to consult you, being a sensible woman, before I come in with my luggage."

"Why," answered the complaisant dame, "if our English be on guard, you have only to ask for Gillian, and they will open the wicket to any single man at once; for we English stick all together, were it but to spite the Normans;—but if a

Norman be on duty, you must ask for old Raoul, and say you come to speak of dogs and hawks for sale, and I warrant you come to speech of me that way. If the sentinel be a Fleming, you have but to say you are a merchant, and he will let you in for the love of trade."

The merchant repeated his thankful acknowledgment, glided from her side, and mixed among the spectators, leaving her to congratulate herself on having gained a brace of florins by the indulgence of her natural talkative humour; for which, on other occasions, she had sometimes paid dearly.

The ceasing of the heavy toll of the castle bell now gave intimation that the noble Raymond Berenger had been laid in the vault with his fathers. That part of the funeral attendants who had come from the host of De Lacy, now proceeded to the castle hall, where they partook, but with temperance, of some refreshments, which were offered as a death-meal; and presently after left the castle, headed by young Damian, in the same slow and melancholy form in which they had entered. The monks remained within the castle to sing repeated services for the soul of the deceased,

and of his faithful men-at-arms who had fallen around him, and who had been so much mangled during, and after, the contest with the Welch, that it was scarce possible to know one individual from another, otherwise the body of Dennis Morolt would have obtained, as his faith well deserved, the honours of a separate funeral.

CHAPTER XI.

> ——The funeral baked meats
> Did coldly furnish forth the marriage table.
>
> *Hamlet.*

The religious rites which followed the funeral of Raymond Berenger endured without interruption for the period of six days; during which, alms were distributed to the poor, and relief administered, at the expense of the Lady Eveline, to all those who had suffered by the late inroad. Death-meals, as they were termed, were also spread in honour of the deceased; but the lady herself, and most of her attendants, observed a stern course of vigil discipline and fasts, which appeared to the Normans a more decorous manner of testifying their respect for the dead, than the Saxon and Flemish custom of banquetting and drinking inordinately upon such occasions.

Meanwhile, the Constable De Lacy retained a large body of his men encamped under the walls of the Garde Doloureuse, for protection against some new irruption of the Welch, while with the rest he took advantage of his victory, and struck terror into the British by many well-conducted forays, marked with ravages scarcely less hurtful than their own. Among the enemy, the evils of discord were added to those of defeat and invasion; for two distant relations of Gwenwyn contended for the throne he had lately occupied, and on this, as on many other occasions, the Britons suffered as much from internal dissension as from the sword of the Normans. A worse politician, and a less celebrated soldier, than the sagacious and successful De Lacy, could not have failed, under such circumstances, to negotiate an advantageous peace, which, while it deprived Powis of a part of its frontier, and the command of some important passes, in which it was the Constable's purpose to build castles, rendered the Garde Doloureuse more secure than formerly, from any sudden attack on the part of their fiery and restless

neighbours. De Lacy's care also went to re-establishing those settlers who had fled from their possessions, and putting the whole lordship, which now descended upon an unprotected female, into a state of defence as perfect as its situation on a hostile frontier could possibly permit.

Whilst thus anxiously provident in the affairs of the orphan of the Garde Doloureuse, De Lacy, during the space we have mentioned, sought not to disturb her filial grief by any personal intercourse. His nephew, indeed, was dispatched by times every morning to lay before her his uncle's *devoirs*, in the high-flown language of the day, and acquaint her with the steps which he had taken in her affairs. As a meed due to his uncle's high services, Damian was always admitted to see Eveline on such occasions, and returned charged with her grateful thanks, and her implicit acquiescence in whatever the Constable proposed for her consideration.

But when the days of rigid mourning were elapsed, the young De Lacy stated, on the part of his kinsman, that his treaty with the Welch being concluded, and all things in the district arranged

as well as circumstances would permit, the Constable of Chester now proposed to return into his own territory, in order to resume his instant preparations for the Holy-Land, which the duty of chastising her enemies had for some days interrupted.

"And will not the noble Constable, before he departs from this place," said Eveline, with a burst of gratitude which the occasion well merited, "receive the personal thanks of her, that was ready to perish when he so valiantly came to her aid?"

"It was even on that point that I was commissioned to speak," replied Damian; "but my noble kinsman feels diffident to propose to you that which he most earnestly desires—the privilege of speaking to your own ear certain matters of high import, and with which he judges it fit to intrust no third party."

"Surely," said the maiden, blushing, "there can be nought beyond the bounds of maidenhood in my seeing the noble Constable whenever such is his pleasure."

"But his vow," replied Damian, "binds my

kinsman not to come beneath a roof until he sets sail for Palestine; and in order to meet him, you must grace him so far as to visit his pavilion;—a condescension which, as a knight and Norman noble, he can scarcely ask of a damsel of high degree."

"And is that all?" said Eveline, who, educated in a remote situation, was a stranger to some of the nice points of etiquette which the damsels of the time observed in keeping their state towards the other sex. "Shall I not," she said, "go to render my thanks to my deliverer, since he cannot come hither to receive them? Tell the noble Hugo de Lacy, that, next to my gratitude to Heaven, it is due to him, and to his brave companions in arms. I will come to his tent as to a holy shrine; and, could such homage please him, I would come barefooted, were the road strewed with flints and with thorns."

"My uncle will be equally honoured and delighted with your resolve," said Damian; "but it will be his study to save you all unnecessary trouble, and with that view a pavilion shall be instantly planted before your castle-gate, which,

if it please you to grace it with your presence, may be the place for the desired interview."

Eveline readily acquiesced in what was proposed, as the expedient agreeable to the Constable, and recommended by Damian; but, in the simplicity of her heart, she saw no good reason why, under the guardianship of the latter, she should not instantly, and without farther form, have traversed the little familiar plain on which, when a child, she used to chase butterflies and gather king's cups, and where of late she was wont to exercise her palfrey, being the only space, and that of small extent, which separated her from the camp of the Constable.

The youthful emissary, with whose presence she had now become familiar, retired to acquaint his kinsman and lord with the success of his commission, and Eveline experienced the first sensation of anxiety upon her own account which had agitated her bosom, since the defeat and death of Gwenwyn gave her permission to dedicate her thoughts exclusively to grief, for the loss which she had sustained in the person of her noble father. But now, when that grief, though not sa-

tiated, was blunted by solitary indulgence—now that she was to appear before the person of whose fame she had heard so much, of whose powerful protection she had received such recent proofs, her mind insensibly turned upon the nature and consequences of that important interview. She had seen Hugo de Lacy, indeed, at the great tournament at Chester, where his valour and skill were the theme of every tongue, and she had received the homage which he rendered her beauty when he assigned to her the prize, with all the gay flutterings of youthful vanity; but of his person and figure she had no distinct idea, excepting that he was a middle-sized man, dressed in peculiarly rich armour, and that the countenance which looked out from under the shade of his raised visor, seemed to her juvenile estimate very nearly as old as that of her father. This person, of whom she had such slight recollection, had been the chosen instrument employed by her tutelar protectress in rescuing her from captivity, and in avenging the loss of a father, and she was bound by her vow to consider him as the arbiter of her fate, if indeed he should deem it worth his while to become

so. She wearied her memory with vain efforts to recollect so much of his features as might give her some means of guessing at his disposition, and her judgment toiled in conjecturing what line of conduct he was likely to pursue towards her.

The great Baron himself seemed to attach to their meeting a degree of consequence, which was intimated by the formal preparations which he made for it. Eveline had imagined that he might have ridden to the gate of the castle in five minutes, and that, if a pavilion were actually necessary to the decorum of their interview, a tent could have been transferred from his leaguer to the castle-gate, and pitched there in ten minutes more. But it was plain that the Constable considered much more form and ceremony as essential to their meeting, for in about half an hour after Damian de Lacy had left the castle, not fewer than twenty soldiers and artificers, under the direction of a pursuivant, whose tabard was decorated with the armorial bearings of the house of Lacy, were employed in erecting before the gate of the Garde Doloureuse one of those splendid pavilions, which were employed at tournaments

and other occasions of public state. It was of purple silk, valanced with gold embroidery, having the cords of the same rich materials. The door-way was formed by six lances, the staves of which were plated with silver, and the blades composed of the same precious metal. These were pitched into the ground by couples, and crossed at the top, so as to form a sort of succession of arches, which were covered by drapery of sea-green silk, forming a pleasing contrast with the purple and gold.

The interior of the tent was declared by Dame Gillian and others, whose curiosity induced them to visit it, to be of a splendour agreeing with the outside. There were oriental carpets, and there were tapestries of Ghent and Bruges mingled in gay profusion, while the top of the pavilion, covered with sky-blue silk, was arranged so as to resemble the firmament, and richly studded with a sun, moon, and stars, composed of solid silver. This celebrated pavilion had been made for the use of the celebrated William of Ypres, who acquired such great wealth as general of the mercenaries of King Stephen, and was by him created

Earl of Albemarle; but the chance of war had assigned it to de Lacy, after one of the dreadful engagements, so many of which occurred during the civil wars betwixt Stephen and the Empress Maude, or Matilda. The Constable had never before been known to use it, for although wealthy and powerful, Hugo de Lacy was, on most occasions, plain and unostentatious; which, to those that knew him, made his present conduct seem the more remarkable. At the hour of noon he arrived, nobly mounted, at the gate of the castle, and, drawing up a small body of servants, pages, and equerries who attended him, in their richest liveries, placed himself at their head, and directed his nephew to intimate to the Lady of the Garde Doloureuse, that the humblest of her servants awaited the honour of her presence at the castle-gate.

Among the spectators who witnessed his arrival, there were many who thought that some part of the state and splendour, attached to his pavilion and his retinue, had been better applied to set forth the person of the Constable himself, as his attire was simple even to meanness, and his

person by no means of such distinguished bearing as might altogether dispense with the advantages of dress and ornament. The opinion became yet more prevalent, when he descended from horseback, until which time his masterly management of the noble animal he bestrode, gave a dignity to his person and figure, which he lost upon dismounting from his steel saddle. In height, the celebrated Constable scarce attained the middle size, and his limbs, though strongly built and well knit, were deficient in grace and ease of movement. His legs were slightly curved outwards, which gave him advantage as a horseman, but shewed unfavourably when he was upon foot. He halted, though very slightly, in consequence of one of his legs having been broken by the fall of a charger, and inartificially set by an inexperienced surgeon. This, also, was a blemish in his deportment; and though his broad shoulders, sinewy arms, and expanded chest, betokened the strength which he often displayed, it was strength of a clumsy and ungraceful character. His language and gestures were those of one seldom used to converse with equals, more seldom

still with superiors; short, abrupt, and decisive, almost to the verge of sternness. In the judgment of those who were habitually acquainted with the Constable, there was both dignity and kindness in his keen eye and expanded brow; but such as saw him for the first time judged less favourably, and pretended to discover a harsh and passionate expression, although they allowed his countenance to have, on the whole, a bold and martial character. His age was in reality not more than five and forty, but the fatigues of war and of climate had added in appearance ten years to that period of time. By far the plainest dressed man of his train, he wore only a short Norman mantle, over the close dress of shamoy-leather, which, almost always covered by his armour, was in some places slightly soiled by its pressure. A brown hat, in which he wore a sprig of rosemary in memory of his vow, served for his head-gear—his good sword and dagger hung at a belt made of sealskin.

Thus accoutred, and at the head of a glittering and gilded band of retainers, who watched his lightest glance, the Constable of Chester awaited

the arrival of the Lady Eveline Berenger, at the gate of her castle of Garde Doloureuse.

The trumpets from within announced her presence—the bridge fell, and led by Damian de Lacy in his gayest habit, and followed by her train of females, and menial or vassal attendants, she came forth in her loveliness from under the massive and antique portal of her paternal fortress. She was dressed without ornaments of any kind, and in deep mourning weeds, as best befitted her recent loss; forming, in this respect, a strong contrast with the rich attire of her conductor, whose costly dress gleamed with jewels and embroidery, while their age and personal beauty made them in every other respect the fair counterpart of each other; a circumstance which probably gave rise to the delighted murmur and buzz which passed through the bystanders on their appearance, and which only respect for the deep mourning of Eveline prevented from breaking out into shouts of applause.

The instant that the fair foot of Eveline had made a step beyond the palisades which formed

the outward barrier of the castle, the Constable de Lacy stepped forward to meet her, and bending his right knee to the earth, craved pardon for the discourtesy which his vow had imposed on him, while he expressed his sense of the honour with which she now graced him, as one for which his life, devoted to her service, would be an inadequate acknowledgment.

The action and speech, though both in consistence with the romantic gallantry of the times, embarrassed Eveline; and the rather that this homage was so publicly rendered. She entreated the Constable to stand up, and not to add to the confusion of one who was already sufficiently at a loss how to acquit herself of the heavy debt of gratitude which she owed him. The Constable arose accordingly, after saluting her hand, which she extended to him, and prayed her, since she was so far condescending, to deign to enter the poor hut he had prepared for her shelter, and to grant him the honour of the audience he had solicited. Eveline, without further answer than a bow, yielded him her hand, and desiring the rest

of her train to remain where they were, commanded the attendance of Rose Flammock.

"Lady," said the Constable, "the matters of which I am compelled thus hastily to speak, are of a nature the most private."

"This maiden," replied Eveline, "is my bower-woman, and acquainted with my most inward thoughts; I beseech you to permit her presence at our conference."

"It were better otherwise," said Hugo de Lacy, with some embarrassment; "but your pleasure shall be obeyed."

He led the Lady Eveline into the tent, and entreated her to be seated on a large pile of cushions, covered with rich Venetian silk. Rose placed herself behind her mistress, half kneeling upon the same cushions, and watched the motions of the all-accomplished soldier and statesman, whom the voice of fame lauded so loudly; enjoying his embarrassment as a triumph of her sex, and scarcely of opinion that his shamoy doublet and square form accorded with the splendour of the scene, or the almost angelical beauty of Eveline, the other actor thereon.

"Lady," said the Constable, after some hesitation, "I would willingly say what it is my lot to tell you, in such terms as ladies love to listen to, and which surely your excellent beauty more especially deserves; but I have been too long trained in camps and councils to express my meaning otherwise than simply and plainly."

"I shall the more easily understand you, my lord," said Eveline, trembling, though she scarce knew why.

"My story, then, must be a blunt one. Something there passed between your honourable father and myself, touching an union of our houses." He paused, as if he wished or expected Eveline to say something, but as she was silent, he proceeded. "I would to God, that as he was at the beginning of this treaty, it had pleased Heaven he should have conducted and concluded it with his usual wisdom; but what remedy?—he has gone the path which we must all tread."

"Your lordship," said Eveline, "has nobly avenged the death of your noble friend."

"I have but done my devoir, lady, as a good knight, in defence of an endangered maiden—

a Lord Marcher in protection of the frontier—and a friend in avenging his friend. But to the point.—Our long and noble line draws near to a close. Of my remote kinsman, Randal Lacy, I will not speak; for in him I see nothing that is good or hopeful, nor have we been at one for many years. My nephew, Damian, gives hopeful promise to be a worthy branch of our ancient tree—but he is scarce twenty years old, and hath a long career of adventure and peril to encounter, ere he can honourably propose to himself the duties of domestic privacy or matrimonial engagements. His mother also is English, some abatement perhaps in the escutcheon of his arms; yet, had ten years more passed over him with the honours of chivalry, I should have proposed Damian de Lacy for the happiness to which I at present myself aspire."

"You—you, my lord!—it is impossible!" said Eveline, endeavouring at the same time to suppress all that could be offensive in the surprise which she could not help exhibiting.

"I do not wonder," replied the Constable, calmly,—for, the ice being now broken, he resumed the natural steadiness of his manner and charac-

ter,—" that you express surprise at this daring proposal. I have not perhaps the form that pleases a lady's eye, and I have forgotten,—that is, if I ever knew them,—the terms and phrases which please a lady's ear; but, noble Eveline, the lady of Hugh de Lacy will be one of the foremost among the matronage of England."

" It will the better become the individual to whom so high a dignity is offered," said Eveline, " to consider how far she is capable of discharging its duties."

" Of that I fear nothing," said De Lacy. " She who hath been so excellent a daughter, cannot be less estimable in every other relation in life."

" I do not find that confidence in myself," replied the embarrassed maiden, " my lord, with which you are so willing to load me—And I—forgive me—must crave time for other inquiries, as well as those which respect myself."

" Your father, noble lady, had this union warmly at heart. This scroll, signed with his own hand, will shew it." He bent his knee as he gave the paper. " The wife of De Lacy wil

have, as the daughter of Raymond Berenger merits, the rank of a princess; his widow, the dowery of a queen."

"Mock me not with your knee, my lord, while you plead to me the paternal commands, which, joined to other circumstances——" She paused, and sighed deeply—"leave me, perhaps, but little room for free will!"

Emboldened by this answer, De Lacy, who had hitherto remained on his knee, rose gently, and assuming a seat beside the Lady Eveline, continued to press his suit,—not indeed in the language of passion, but of a plain-spoken man, eagerly urging a proposal on which his happiness depended. The vision of the miraculous image was, it may be supposed, uppermost in the mind of Eveline, who, tied down by the solemn vow she had made on that occasion, felt herself constrained to return evasive answers, where she might perhaps have given a direct negative, had her own wishes alone been to decide her reply.

"You cannot," she said, "expect from me, my lord, in this my so recent orphan state, that I should come to a speedy determination upon an

affair of such deep importance. Give me leisure of your nobleness for consideration with myself—for consultation with my friends."

"Alas! fair Eveline," said the Baron, "do not be offended at my urgency. I cannot long delay setting forward on a distant and perilous expedition; and the short time left me for soliciting your favour must be an apology for my importunity."

"And is it in these circumstances, noble De Lacy, that you would encumber yourself with family ties?"

"I am God's soldier," said the Constable, "and He in whose cause I fight in Palestine will defend my wife in England."

"Hear then my present answer, my lord," said Eveline Berenger, rising from her seat. "To-morrow I proceed to the Benedictine nunnery at Gloucester, where resides my honoured father's sister, who is Abbess of that reverend house. To her guidance I will commit myself in this matter."

"A fair and maidenly resolution," answered De Lacy, who seemed, on his part, rather glad

that the conference was abridged, "and, as I trust, not altogether unfavourable to the suit of your humble suppliant, since the good Lady Abbess hath been long my honoured friend." He then turned to Rose, who was about to attend her lady:—"Pretty maiden," he said, offering a chain of gold, "let this carcanet encircle thy neck, and buy thy good will."

"My good will cannot be purchased, my lord," said Rose, putting back the gift which he proffered.

"Your fair word, then," said the Constable, again pressing it upon her.

"Fair words are easily bought," said Rose, still rejecting the chain, "but they are seldom worth the purchase-money."

"Do you scorn my proffer, damsel?" said De Lacy; "it has graced the neck of a Norman count."

"Give it to a Norman countess then, my lord," said the damsel; "I am plain Rose Flammock, the weaver's daughter. I keep my good word to go with my good will, and a latten chain will become me as well as beaten gold."

"Peace, Rose," said her lady; "you are over malapert to talk thus to the Lord Constable.—And you, my lord," she continued, "permit me now to depart, since you are possessed of my answer to your present proposal. I regret it had not been of some less delicate nature, that by granting it at once, and without delay, I might have shewn my sense of your services."

The lady was handed forth by the Constable of Chester, with the same ceremony which had been observed at their entrance, and she returned to her own castle, sad and anxious in mind for the event of this important conference. She gathered closely around her the great mourning veil, that the alteration of her countenance might not be observed; and, without pausing to speak even to Father Aldrovand, she instantly withdrew to the privacy of her own bower.

CHAPTER XII.

Now all ye ladies of fair Scotland,
And ladies of England that happy would prove,
Marry never for houses, nor marry for land,
Nor marry for nothing but only love.
Family Quarrels.

When the Lady Eveline had retired into her own private chamber, Rose Flammock followed her unbidden, and proffered her assistance in removing the large veil which she had worn while she was abroad; but the lady refused her permission, saying, "You are forward with service, maiden, when it is not required of you."

"You are displeased with me, lady!" said Rose.

"And if I am, I have cause," replied Eveline. "You know my difficulties—you know what my duty demands; yet, instead of aiding me to make the sacrifice, you render it more difficult."

"Would I had influence to guide your path,"

said Rose, "you should find it a smooth one—ay, an honest and straight one, to boot."

"How mean you, maiden?" said Eveline.

"I would have you," answered Rose, "recal the encouragement—the consent, I may almost call it, you have yielded to this proud Baron. He is too great to be loved himself—too haughty to love you as you deserve. If you wed him, you wed gilded misery, and, it may be, dishonour as well as discontent."

"Remember, damsel, his services towards us."

"His services?" answered Rose. "He ventured his life for us, indeed, but so did every soldier in his host. And am I bound to wed any ruffling blade among them, because he fought when the trumpet sounded? I wonder what is the meaning of their *devoir*, as they call it, when it shames them not to claim the highest reward woman can bestow, merely for discharging the duty of a gentleman by a distressed creature. A gentleman, said I?—The coarsest boor in Flanders would hardly expect thanks for doing the duty of a man by women in such a case."

"But my father's wishes?"

"They had reference, without doubt, to the

inclination of your father's daughter. I will not do my late noble lord—(may God assoilzie him!)—the injustice to suppose he would have urged aught in this matter which squared not with your free choice."

"Then my vow—my fatal vow—as I had well nigh called it," said Eveline. "May Heaven forgive me my ingratitude to my patroness!"

"Even this shakes me not," said Rose; "I will never believe our Lady of Mercy would exact such a penalty for her protection, as to desire me to wed the man I could not love. She smiled, you say, upon your prayer. Go—lay at her feet these difficulties which oppress you, and see if she will not smile again. Or seek a dispensation from your vow—seek it at the expense of the half of your estate—seek it at the expense of your whole property. Go a pilgrimage barefooted to Rome—do anything but give your hand where you cannot give your heart."

"You speak warmly, Rose," said Eveline, still sighing as she spoke.

"Alas! my sweet lady, I have cause. Have I not seen a household where love was not—where, although there was worth and good will, and enough

of the means of life, all was embittered by regrets, which were not only vain, but criminal?"

"Yet, methinks, Rose, a sense of what is due to ourselves and to others, may, if listened to, guide and comfort us under such feelings even as thou hast described."

"It will save us from sin, lady, but not from sorrow," answered Rose; "and wherefore should we, with our eyes open, rush into circumstances where duty must war with inclination? Why row against wind and tide, when you may as easily take advantage of the breeze?"

"Because the voyage of my life lies where winds and currents oppose me," answered Eveline. "It is my fate, Rose."

"Not unless you make it such by choice," answered Rose. "O! could you but have seen the pale cheek, sunken eye, and dejected bearing of my poor mother!—I have said too much."

"It was then your mother," said her young lady, "of whose unhappy wedlock you have spoken?"

"It was—it was," said Rose, bursting into tears. "I have exposed my own shame to save you from sorrow. Unhappy she was, though

most guiltless—so unhappy, that the breach of the dyke, and the inundation in which she perished, were, but for my sake, to her welcome as night to the weary labourer. She had a heart like yours, formed to love and be loved; and it would be doing honour to yonder proud Baron, to say he had such worth as my father's.—Yet was she most unhappy. O! my sweet lady, be warned, and break off this ill-omened match!"

Eveline returned the pressure with which the affectionate girl, as she clung to her hand, enforced her well-meant advice, and then muttered, with a profound sigh,—"Rose, it is too late."

"Never—never," said Rose, looking eagerly round the room. "Where are those writing materials?—Let me fetch Father Aldrovand, and instruct him of your pleasure—or, stay, the good father hath himself an eye on the splendours of the world which he thinks he has abandoned—he will be no safe secretary.—I will go myself to the Lord Constable—*me* his rank cannot dazzle, or his wealth bribe, or his power overawe. I will tell him he doth no knightly part towards you, to press his contract with your father in such an hour of helpless sorrow—no pious part, in delay-

ing the execution of his vows for the purpose of marrying or giving in marriage—no honest part, to press himself on a maiden whose heart has not decided in his favour—no wise part, to marry one whom he must presently abandon, either to solitude, or to the dangers of a profligate court."

"You have not courage for such an embassy, Rose," said her mistress, sadly smiling through her tears at her youthful attendant's zeal.

"Not courage for it!—and wherefore not?—Try me," answered the Flemish maiden, in return. "I am neither Saracen nor Welchman—his lance and sword scare me not. I follow not his banner—his voice of command concerns me not. I could, with your leave, boldly tell him he is a selfish man, veiling with fair and honourable pretexts his pursuit of objects which concern his own pride and gratification, and founding high claims on having rendered the services which common humanity demanded. And all for what?—Forsooth the great De Lacy must have an heir to his noble house, and his fair nephew is not good enough to be his representative, because his mother was of Anglo-Saxon strain, and the real heir must be pure unmixed Norman; and for this,

Lady Eveline Berenger, in the first bloom of youth, must be wedded to a man who might be her father, and who, after leaving her unprotected for years, will return in such guise as might beseem her grandfather!"

"Since he is thus scrupulous concerning purity of lineage," said Eveline, "perhaps he may call to mind what so good a herald as he is cannot fail to know—that I am of Saxon strain by my father's mother."

"Oh!" replied Rose, "he will forgive that blot in the heiress of the Garde Doloureuse."

"Fie, Rose," answered her mistress, "thou doest him wrong in taxing him with avarice."

"Perhaps so," answered Rose; "but he is undeniably ambitious; and Avarice, I have heard, is Ambition's bastard brother, though Ambition be ashamed of the relationship."

"You speak too boldly, damsel," said Eveline; "and, while I acknowledge your affection, it becomes me to check your mode of expression."

"Nay, take that tone, and I have done," said Rose.—"To Eveline, whom I love, and who loves me, I can speak freely—but to the Lady of the Garde Doloureuse, the proud Norman dam-

sel, (which when you choose to be you can be,) I can curtsey as low as my station demands, and speak as little truth as she cares to hear."

"Thou art a wild but a kind girl," said Eveline; "no one who did not know thee would think that soft and childish exterior covered such a soul of fire. Thy mother must indeed have been the being of feeling and passion you paint her; for thy father—nay, nay, never arm in his defence until he be attacked—I only meant to say, that his solid sense and sound judgment are his most distinguished qualities."

"And I would you would avail yourself of them, lady," said Rose.

"In fitting things I will; but he were rather an unmeet counsellor in that which we now treat of," said Eveline.

"You mistake him," answered Rose Flammock, "and underrate his value. Sound judgment is like to the graduated measuring-wand, which, though usually applied only to coarser cloths, will give with equal truth the dimensions of Indian silk, or of cloth of gold."

"Well—well—this affair presses not instantly at least. Leave me now, Rose, and send Gillian

the tire-woman hither—I have directions to give about the packing and removal of my wardrobe."

"That Gillian, the tire-woman, hath been a mighty favourite of late," said Rose; "time was when it was otherwise."

"I like her manners as little as thou doest," said Eveline; "but she is old Raoul's wife—she was a sort of half favourite with my dear father—who, like other men, was perhaps taken by that very freedom which we think unseemly in persons of our sex,—and then, there is no other woman in the castle that hath such skill in empacketing clothes without the risk of their being injured."

"That last reason alone," said Rose, smiling, "is, I admit, an irresistible pretension to favour, and Dame Gillian shall presently attend you.—But take my advice, lady—keep her to her bales, and her mails, and let her not prate to you on what concerns her not."

So saying, Rose left the apartment, and her young lady looked after her in silence—then murmured to herself—"Rose loves me truly; but she would willingly be more of the mistress than the maiden; and then she is somewhat jealous of

every other person that approaches me.—It is strange, that I have not seen Damian de Lacy since my interview with the Constable. He anticipates, I suppose, the chance of his getting in me a severe aunt!"

But the domestics, who crowded for orders with reference to her removal early on the morrow, began now to divert the current of their lady's thoughts from consideration of her own particular situation, which, as the prospect presented nothing pleasant, with the elastic spirit of youth, she willingly postponed till farther leisure.

CHAPTER XIII.

Too much rest is rust,
There's ever cheer in changing;
We tyne by too much trust,
So we'll be up and ranging.

Old Song.

EARLY on the subsequent morning, a gallant company, saddened indeed by the deep mourning which their principals wore, left the well-defended Castle of the Garde Doloureuse, which had been so lately the scene of such remarkable events.

The sun was just beginning to exhale the heavy dews which had fallen during the night, and to disperse the thin grey mist which eddied around towers and battlements, when Wilkin Flammock, with six cross-bow men on horseback, and as many spearmen on foot, sallied forth from under the Gothic gate-way, and crossed the sounding draw-bridge. After this advanced guard, came four

household servants well mounted, and, after them, as many inferior female attendants all in mourning. Then rode forth the young Lady Eveline herself, occupying the centre of the little procession, and her long black robes formed a striking contrast to the colour of her milk-white palfrey. Beside her, on a Spanish jennet, the gift of her affectionate father,—who had procured it at a high rate, and who would have given half his substance to gratify his daughter,—sat the girlish form of Rose Flammock, who had so much of juvenile shyness in her manner, so much of feeling and of judgment in her thoughts and actions. Dame Margery followed, mixed in the party escorted by Father Aldrovand, whose company she chiefly frequented; for Margery affected a little the character of the devotee, and her influence in the family, as having been Eveline's nurse, was so great as to render her no improper companion for the chaplain, when her lady did not require her attendance on her own person. Then came old Raoul the huntsman, his wife, and two or three other officers of Raymond Berenger's household; the steward, with his gold-

en chain, velvet cassock, and white wand, bringing up the rear, which was closed by a small band of archers, and four men-at-arms. The guards, and indeed the greater part of the attendants, were only designed to give the necessary degree of honour to the young lady's movements, by accompanying her a short space from the castle, where they were met by the Constable of Chester, who, with a retinue of thirty lances, proposed himself to escort Eveline as far as Gloucester, the present place of her destination. Under his protection no danger was to be apprehended, even if the severe defeat so lately sustained by the Welch had not of itself been like to prevent any attempt, on the part of those hostile mountaineers, to disturb the safety of the marches for some time to come.

In pursuance of this arrangement, which permitted the armed part of Eveline's retinue to return for the protection of the castle, and the restoration of order in the district around, the Constable awaited her at the fatal bridge, at the head of the gallant band of selected horsemen whom he had ordered to attend upon him. The parties

halted, as if to salute each other; but the Constable, observing that Eveline drew her veil more closely around her, and recollecting the loss she had so lately sustained on that luckless spot, had the judgment to confine his greeting to a mute reverence, so low that the lofty plume which he wore, (for he was now in complete armour,) mingled with the flowing mane of his gallant horse. Wilkin Flammock next halted, to ask the lady if she had any farther commands.

"None, good Wilkin; but to be, as ever, true and watchful."

"The properties of a good mastiff," said Flammock. "Some rude sagacity, and a stout hand instead of a sharp case of teeth, are all that I can claim to be added to them—I will do my best.—Fare thee well, Roschen! Thou art going among strangers—forget not the qualities which made thee loved at home. The saints bless thee—farewell!"

The steward next approached to take his leave, but in doing so, had nearly met with a fatal accident. It had been the pleasure of Raoul, who was

in his own disposition cross-grained, and in person rheumatic, to accommodate himself with an old Arab horse, which had been kept for breed, as lean, and almost as lame as himself, and with a temper as vicious as that of a fiend. Betwixt the rider and the horse was a constant misunderstanding, testified on Raoul's part by oaths, rough checks with the curb, and severe digging with the spurs, which Mahound, (so was the horse christened,) answered by plunging, bounding, and endeavouring by all expedients to unseat his rider, as well as striking and lashing out furiously at whatever else approached him. It was thought by many of the household, that Raoul preferred this vicious, cross-tempered animal upon all occasions when he travelled in company with his wife, in order to take advantage by the chance, that amongst the various kicks, plunges, gambades, lashings out, and other eccentricities of Mahound, his heels might come in contact with Dame Gillian's ribs. And now, when as the important steward spurred up his palfrey to kiss his young lady's hand, and to take his leave, it seemed to the bystanders as if Raoul

so managed his bridle and spur, that Mahound yerked out his hoofs at the same moment, one of which coming in contact with the steward's thigh, would have splintered it like a rotten reed, had the parties been a couple of inches nearer to each other. As it was, the steward sustained considerable damage; and they that observed the grin upon Raoul's vinegar countenance entertained little doubt, that Mahound's heels then and there avenged certain nods, winks, and wreathed smiles, which had passed betwixt the gold-chained functionary and the coquettish tire-woman since the party left the castle.

This incident abridged the painful solemnity of parting betwixt the Lady Eveline and her dependents, and lessened at the same time the formality of her meeting with the Constable, and, as it were, resigning herself to his protection.

Hugo de Lacy, having commanded six of his men-at-arms to proceed as an advanced-guard, remained himself to see the steward properly deposited on a litter, and then, with the rest of his followers, marched in military fashion about one hundred yards in the rear of the Lady Eveline

and her retinue, judiciously forbearing to present himself to her society while she was engaged in the orisons which the place where they met naturally suggested, and waiting patiently until the elasticity of youthful temper should require some diversion of the gloomy thoughts which the scene inspired.

Guided by this policy, the Constable did not approach the ladies until the advance of the morning rendered it politeness to remind them, that a pleasant spot for breaking their fast occurred in the neighbourhood, where he had ventured to make some preparations for rest and refreshment. Immediately after the Lady Eveline had intimated her acceptance of this courtesy, they came in sight of the spot he alluded to, marked by an ancient oak, which, spreading its broad branches far and wide, reminded the traveller of that of Mamre, under which celestial beings accepted the hospitality of the patriarch. Across two of these huge projecting arms was flung a piece of rose-coloured sarsnet, as a canopy to keep off the morning beams which were already rising high. Cushions of silk, interchanged with others covered with the furs of

animals of the chase, were arranged round a repast, which a Norman cook had done his utmost to distinguish, by the superior delicacy of his art, from the gross meals of the Saxons, and the penurious simplicity of the Welch tables. A fountain, which bubbled from under a large mossy stone at some distance, refreshed the ear with its sound, and the taste with its liquid crystal; while, at the same time, it formed a cistern for cooling two or three flasks of Gascon wine and hippocras, which were at that time the necessary accompaniments of the morning meal.

When Eveline, with Rose, the Confessor, and at some farther distance her faithful nurse, was seated at this sylvan banquet, the leaves rustling to a gentle breeze, the water bubbling in the background, the birds twittering around, while the half-heard sounds of conversation and laughter at a distance announced that their guard was in their vicinity, she could not avoid making the Constable some natural compliment on his happy selection of a place of repose.

"You do me more than justice," replied the Baron; "the spot was selected by my nephew,

who hath a fancy like a minstrel. Myself am but slow in imagining such devices."

Rose looked full at her mistress, as if she endeavoured to look into her very inmost soul; but Eveline answered with the utmost simplicity,—"And wherefore hath not the noble Damian waited to join us at the entertainment which he hath directed?"

"He prefers riding onward," said the Baron, "with some light-horsemen; for, notwithstanding there are now no Welch knaves stirring, yet the marches are never free from robbers and outlaws; and though there is nothing to fear for a band like ours, yet you should not be alarmed even by the approach of danger."

"I have indeed seen but too much of it lately," said Eveline; and relapsed into the melancholy mood from which the novelty of the scene had for a moment awakened her.

Meanwhile, the Constable, removing, with the assistance of his squire, his mailed hood and its steel crest, as well as his gauntlets, remained in his flexible coat-of-mail, composed entirely of rings of steel curiously interwoven, his hands bare,

and his brows covered with a velvet bonnet of a peculiar fashion, appropriated to the use of knights, and called a *mortier*, which permitted him both to converse and to eat more easily than when he wore the full defensive armour. His discourse was plain, sensible, and manly; and, turning upon the state of the country, and the precautions to be observed for governing and defending so disorderly a frontier, it became gradually interesting to Eveline, one of whose warmest wishes was to be the protectress of her father's vassals. De Lacy, on his part, seemed much pleased; for young as Eveline was, her questions shewed intelligence, and her mode of answering, both apprehension and docility. In short, familiarity was so far established betwixt them, that in the next stage of their journey the Constable seemed to think his appropriate place was at the Lady Eveline's bridle-rein; and although she certainly did not encourage his attendance, yet neither did she seem willing to discourage it. Himself no ardent lover, although captivated both with the beauty and the amiable qualities of the fair orphan, De Lacy was satisfied with being endured as a companion, and made no

efforts to improve the opportunity which this familiarity afforded him, by recurring to any of the topics of the preceding day.

A halt was made at noon in a small village, where the same purveyor had made preparations for their accommodation, and particularly for that of the Lady Eveline; but, something to her surprise, he himself remained invisible. The conversation of the Constable of Chester was doubtless in the highest degree instructive; but at Eveline's years, a maiden may be excused for wishing some addition to the society in the person of a younger and less serious attendant; and when she recollected the regularity with which Damian Lacy had hitherto made his respects to her, she rather wondered at his continued absence. But her reflection went no deeper than the passing thought of one who is not quite so much delighted with her present society, as not to believe it capable of an agreeable addition. She was lending a patient ear to the account which the Constable gave her of the descent and pedigree of a gallant knight of the distinguished family of Herbert, at whose castle he purposed to repose during the night,

when one of the retinue announced a messenger from the Lady of Baldringham.

"My honoured father's aunt," said Eveline, arising to testify that respect for age and relationship which the manners of the time required.

"I knew not," said the Constable, "that my gallant friend had such a relative."

"She was my grandmother's sister," answered Eveline, "a noble Saxon lady; but she disliked the match formed with a Norman house, and never saw her sister after the period of her marriage."

She broke off, as the messenger, who had the appearance of the steward of a person of consequence, entered their presence, and bending his knee reverently, delivered a letter, which, being examined by Father Aldrovand, was found to contain the following invitation, expressed not in French, then the general language of communication amongst the gentry, but in the old Saxon language, modified as it now was by some intermixture of French.

"If the grand-daughter of Aelfreid of Baldringham hath so much of the old Saxon strain as to desire to see an ancient relation, who still dwells in

the house of her forefathers, and lives after their manner, she is thus invited to repose for the night in the dwelling of Ermengarde of Baldringham."

"Your pleasure will be, doubtless, to decline the present hospitality," said the Constable de Lacy; "the noble Herbert expects us, and has made great preparation."

"Your presence, my lord," said Eveline, "will more than console him for my absence. It is fitting and proper that I should meet my aunt's advances to reconciliation, since she has condescended to make them."

De Lacy's brow was slightly clouded, for seldom had he met with anything approaching to contradiction of his pleasure. "I pray you to reflect, Lady Eveline," he said, "that your aunt's house is probably defenceless, or at least very imperfectly guarded—Would it not be your pleasure that I should continue my dutiful attendance?"

"Of that, my lord, mine aunt can, in her own house, be the sole judge; and methinks, as she has not deemed it necessary to request the honour of your lordship's company, it were unbecoming in me to permit you to take the trouble of attendance;—

you have already had but too much on my account."

"But for the sake of your own safety, madam," said De Lacy, unwilling to leave his charge.

"My safety, my lord, cannot be endangered in the house of so near a relative: whatever precautions she may take for her own security, will doubtless be amply sufficient for mine."

"I hope it will be found so," said de Lacy; "and I will at least add to them the security of a patrole around the castle during your abode in it." He stopped, and then proceeded with some hesitation to express his hopes, that Eveline, now about to visit a kinswoman whose prejudices against the Norman race were generally known, would be on her guard against what she might hear upon that subject.

Eveline answered with dignity, that the daughter of Raymond Berenger was unlikely to listen to any opinions which would affect the dignity of that good knight's nation and descent; and with this assurance, the Constable, finding it impossible to obtain any which had more special refer-

ence to himself and his suit, was compelled to remain satisfied. He recollected also that the Castle of Herbert was within two miles of the habitation of the Lady of Baldringham, and that his separation from Eveline was but for one night; yet a sense of the difference betwixt their years, and perhaps of his own deficiency in those lighter qualifications by which the female heart is supposed to be most frequently won, rendered even this temporary absence matter of anxious thought and apprehension; so that, during their afternoon journey, he rode in silence by Eveline's side, rather meditating what was to chance to-morrow, than endeavouring to avail himself of present opportunity; and in this unsocial manner they travelled on until the point was reached where they were to separate for the evening.

This was an elevated spot, from which they could see, on the right hand, the Castle of Amelot Herbert, rising high upon an eminence, with all its Gothic pinnacles and turrets; and on the left, low-embowered amongst oaken woods, the rude and lonely dwelling in which the Lady of Baldringham still maintained the customs of the Anglo-

Saxons, and looked with contempt and hatred on all innovations that had been introduced since the battle of Hastings.

Here the Constable De Lacy, having charged a part of his men to attend the Lady Eveline to the house of her relation, and to keep watch around it with the utmost vigilance, but at such a distance as might not give offence or inconvenience to the family, kissed her hand, and took a reluctant leave. Eveline proceeded onwards by a path so little trodden, as to shew the solitary condition of the mansion to which it led. Large kine, of an uncommon and valuable breed, were feeding in the rich pastures around; and now and then fallow deer, which appeared to have lost the shyness of their nature, tripped across the glades of the woodland, or stood and lay in small groups under some great oak. The transient pleasure which such a scene of rural quiet was calculated to afford, changed to more serious feelings, when a sudden turn brought her at once in front of the mansion-house, of which she had seen nothing since she first beheld it from the point where she parted with the Constable, and which

she had more than one reason for regarding with some apprehension.

The house, for it could not be termed a castle, was only two stories high, low and massively built, with doors and windows forming the heavy round arch which is usually called Saxon;—the walls were mantled with various creeping plants, which had crept along them undisturbed—grass grew up to the very threshold, at which hung a buffaloe's horn, suspended by a brass chain. A massive door of black oak closed a gate, which much resembled the ancient entrance of a ruined sepulchre, and not a soul appeared to acknowledge or greet their arrival.

"Were I you, my Lady Eveline," said the officious dame Gillian, "I would turn bridle yet; for this old dungeon seems little likely to afford food or shelter to Christian folks."

Eveline imposed silence on her indiscreet attendant, though exchanging herself a look with Rose which confessed something like timidity, as she commanded Raoul to blow the horn at the gate. "I have heard," she said, "that my aunt loves

the ancient customs so well, that she is loath to admit into her halls anything younger than the time of Edward the Confessor."

Raoul, in the meantime, cursing the rude instrument which baffled his skill in sounding a regular call, and gave voice only to a tremendous and discordant roar, which seemed to shake the old walls, thick as they were, repeated his summons three times before they obtained admittance. On the third sounding, the gate opened, and a numerous retinue of servants of both sexes appeared in the dark and narrow hall, at the upper end of which a great fire of wood was sending its furnace-blast up an antique chimney, whose front, as extensive as that of a modern kitchen, was carved over with ornaments of massive stone, and garnished on the top with a long range of niches, from each of which frowned the image of some Saxon Saint, whose barbarous name was scarce to be found in the Romish calendar.

The same officer who had brought the invitation from his lady to Eveline, now stepped forward, as she supposed, to assist her from her palfrey; but it was in reality to lead it by the bridle-

rein into the paved hall itself, and up to a raised platform, or *dais*, at the upper end of which she was at length permitted to dismount. Two matrons of advanced years, and four young women of gentle birth, educated by the bounty of Ermengarde, attended with reverence the arrival of her kinswoman. Eveline would have inquired of them for her grand-aunt, but the matrons with much respect laid their fingers on their mouths, as if to enjoin her silence; a gesture which, united to the singularity of her reception in other respects, still further excited her curiosity to see her venerable relative.

It was soon gratified; for, through a pair of folding-doors which opened not far from the platform on which she stood, she was ushered into a large low apartment hung with arras; at the upper end of which, under a species of canopy, was seated the ancient Lady of Baldringham. Fourscore years had not quenched the brightness of her eyes, or bent an inch of her stately height; her grey hair was still so profuse as to form a tier, combined as it was with a chaplet of ivy leaves; her long dark-coloured gown fell in ample folds, and the

broidered girdle, which gathered it around her, was fastened by a buckle of gold, studded with precious stones, which were worth an Earl's ransom ; her features, which had once been beautiful, or rather majestic, bore still, though faded and wrinkled, an air of melancholy and stern grandeur, that assorted well with her garb and deportment. She had a staff of ebony in her hand ; at her feet rested a large aged wolf-dog, who pricked his ears and bristled up his neck, as the step of a stranger, a sound so seldom heard in these halls, approached the chair in which his aged mistress sat motionless.

" Peace, Thryme," said the venerable dame ; " and thou, daughter of the house of Baldringham, approach, and fear not their ancient servant."

The hound sunk down to his couchant posture when she spoke, and, excepting the red glare of his eye, might have seemed a hieroglyphical emblem, lying at the feet of some ancient priestess of Woden, or Freya ; so strongly did the appearance of Ermengarde, with her rod and her chaplet, correspond with the ideas of the days of Paganism.

Yet he who had thus deemed of her would have done therein much injustice to a venerable Christian matron, who had given many a hide of land to holy church, in honour of God and Saint Dunstan.

Ermengarde's reception of Eveline was of the same antiquated and formal cast with her mansion and her exterior. She did not at first arise from her seat when the noble maiden approached her, nor did she even admit her to the salute which she advanced to offer; but, laying her hand on Eveline's arm, stopped her as she advanced, and perused her countenance with an earnest and unsparing eye of minute observation.

"Berwine," she said to the most favoured of the two attendants, "our niece hath the skin and eyes of the Saxon hue; but the hue of her eyebrows and hair is from the foreigner and alien.—Thou art, nevertheless, welcome to my house, maiden," she added, addressing Eveline, "especially if thou canst bear to hear that thou art not absolutely a perfect creature, as doubtless these flatterers around thee have taught thee to believe."

So saying, she at length arose, and saluted her niece with a kiss on the forehead. She released her not, however, from her grasp, but proceeded to give the attention to her garments which she had hitherto bestowed upon her features.

"Saint Dunstan keep us from vanity!" she said; "and so this is the new guise—and modest maidens wear such tunics as these, shewing the shape of their persons as plain as if (Saint Mary defend us!) they were altogether without garments! And see, Berwine, these gauds on the neck, and that neck itself uncovered as low as the shoulder—these be the guises which strangers have brought into merry England! and this pouch, like a player's placket, hath but little to do with housewifery, I wot; and that dagger, too, like a glee-man's wife, that rides a mumming in masculine apparel—dost thou ever go to the wars, maiden, that thou wearest steel at thy girdle?"

Eveline, equally surprised and disobliged by the depreciating catalogue of her apparel, replied to the last question with some spirit,—"The mode may have altered, madam; but I only wear such garments as are now worn by those of my age and

condition. For the poniard, madam, it is not many days since I regarded it as the last resource betwixt me and dishonour."

"The maiden speaks well and boldly, Berwine," said Dame Ermengarde; "and, in truth, pass we but over some of these vain fripperies, is attired in a comely fashion. Thy father, I hear, fell knight-like in the field of battle."

"He did so," answered Eveline, her eyes filling with tears at the recollection of her recent loss.

"I never saw him," continued Dame Ermengarde; "he carried the old Norman scorn towards the Saxon stock, whom they wed but for what they can make by them, as the bramble clings to the elm;—nay, never seek to vindicate him," she continued, observing that Eveline was about to speak, "I have known the Norman spirit for many a year ere thou wert born."

At this moment the steward appeared in the chamber, and, after a low genuflection, asked his lady's pleasure concerning the guard of Norman soldiers who remained without the mansion.

"Norman soldiers in the house of Baldring-

ham!" said the old lady, fiercely; "who brings them hither, and for what purpose?"

"They come, as I think," said the sewer, "to wait on and guard this gracious young lady."

"What, my daughter," said Ermengarde, in a tone of melancholy reproach, "darest thou not trust thyself unguarded for one night in the castle of thy forefathers?"

"God forbid else!" said Eveline. "But these men are not mine, nor under my authority. They are part of the train of the Constable De Lacy, who left them to watch around the castle, thinking there might be danger from robbers."

"Robbers," said Ermengarde, "have never harmed the house of Baldringham, since a Norman robber stole from it its best treasure in the person of thy grandmother.—And so, poor bird, thou art already captive—unhappy flutterer! But it is thy lot, and wherefore should I wonder or repine? When was there fair maiden with a wealthy dower, but she was ere maturity destined to be the slave of some of these petty kings, who [illegible]w us to call nothing ours that their passions c[illegible]vet? Well

—I cannot aid thee—I am but a poor and neglected woman, feeble both from sex and age.—And to which of these De Lacys art thou the destined household drudge?"

A question so asked, and by one whose prejudices were of such a determined character, was not likely to draw from Eveline any confession of the real circumstances in which she was placed, since it was but too plain her Saxon relation could have afforded her neither sound counsel nor useful assistance. She replied therefore briefly, that as the Lacys, and the Normans in general, were unwelcome to her kinswoman, she would entreat of the commander of the patrole to withdraw it from the neighbourhood of Baldringham.

"Not so, my niece," said the old lady; "as we cannot escape the Norman neighbourhood, or get beyond the sound of their curfew, it signifies not whether they be near our walls or more far off, so that they enter them not.—And, Berwine, bid Hundwolf drench the Normans with liquor, and gorge them with food—food of the best, and liquor of the strongest. Let them not say the old Saxon

hag is churlish of her hospitality. Broach a piece of wine, for I warrant their gentle stomachs brook no ale."

Berwine, her huge bunch of keys jangling at her girdle, withdrew to give the necessary directions, and presently returned. Meanwhile Ermengarde proceeded to question her niece more closely. "Is it that thou wilt not, or canst not, tell me to which of the De Lacys thou art to be bondswoman?—to the overweening Constable, who, sheathed in impenetrable armour, and mounted on a swift and strong horse, as invulnerable as himself, takes pride that he rides down and stabs at his ease, and with perfect safety, the bare and dismounted Welchmen?—or is it to his nephew, the beardless Damian?—or must thy possessions go to mend a breach in the fortunes of that other cousin, the decayed reveller, who can no longer ruffle it among the debauched crusaders for want of means?"

"My honoured aunt," replied Eveline, naturally displeased with this discourse, "to none of the Lacys, and I trust to none other, Saxon or Norman, will your kinswoman become a household drudge. There was, before the death of my

honoured father, some treaty betwixt him and the Constable, on which account I cannot at presen decline his attendance; but what may be th issue of it, fate must determine."

"But I can shew thee, niece, how the balanc of fate inclines," said Ermengarde, in a low an mysterious voice. "Those united with us b blood have, in some sort, the privilege of lookin forward beyond the points of present time, an seeing in their very bud the thorns or flowe which are one day to encircle their head."

"For my own sake, noble kinswoman," an swered Eveline, "I would decline such foreknowledge, even were it possible to acquire it without transgressing the rules of the Church. Could I have foreseen what has befallen me within these last unhappy days, I had lost the enjoyment of every happy moment before that time."

"Nevertheless, daughter," said the Lady of Baldringham, "thou, like others of thy race, must within this house conform to the rule, of passing one night within the chamber of the Red-Finger.—Berwine, see that it be prepared for my niece's reception."

"I—I—have heard speak of that chamber, gracious aunt," said Eveline, timidly, "and if it may consist with your good pleasure, I would not now choose to pass the night there. My health has suffered by my late perils and fatigues, and with your good will I will delay to another time the usage, which I have heard is peculiar to the daughters of the house of Baldringham."

"And which, notwithstanding, you would willingly avoid," said the old Saxon lady, bending her brows angrily. "Has not such disobedience cost your house enough already?"

"Indeed, honoured and gracious lady," said Berwine, unable to forbear interference, though well knowing the obstinacy of her patroness, "that chamber can scarce be made fit for the Lady Eveline; and the noble damsel looks so pale, and hath lately suffered so much, that, might I have the permission to advise, this were better delayed."

"Thou art a fool, Berwine," said the old lady, sternly; "thinkest thou I will bring anger and misfortune on my house, by suffering this girl to leave it without rendering the usual homage to the

Red-Finger? Go to—let the room be made ready—small preparation may serve, if she cherish not the Norman nicety about bed and lodging. Do not reply; but do as I command thee.—And you, Eveline—are you so far degenerated from the brave spirit of your ancestry, that you dare not pass a few hours in an ancient apartment?"

"You are my hostess, gracious madam," said Eveline, "and must assign my apartment where you judge proper—my courage is such as innocence and some pride of blood and birth have given me. It has been, of late, severely tried; but, since such is your pleasure, and the customs of your house, my heart is yet strong enough to encounter what you propose to subject me to."

She paused here in displeasure; for she could not but resent, in some measure, her aunt's conduct, as unkind and inhospitable. And yet when she reflected upon the foundation of the legend of the chamber to which she was consigned, she could not but regard the Lady of Baldringham as having considerable reason for her conduct, according to the traditions of the family, and the belief of the times, in which Eveline herself was devout.

CHAPTER XIV.

> Sometimes, methinks, I hear the groans of ghosts,
> Then hollow sounds and lamentable screams;
> Then, like a dying echo from afar,
> My mother's voice, that cries, "Wed not, Almeyda—
> Forewarned, Almeyda, marriage is thy crime."
>
> *Don Sebastian.*

THE evening at Baldringham would have seemed of portentous and unendurable length, had it not been that apprehended danger makes time pass quickly betwixt us and the dreaded hour, and that if Eveline felt little interested or amused by the conversation of her aunt and Berwine, which turned upon the long deduction of their ancestors from the warlike Horsa, and the feats of Saxon champions, and the miracles of Saxon monks, she was still better pleased to listen to these legends, than to anticipate her retreat to the destined and dreaded apartment where she was to pass the night. There lacked not, however, such amusement as the house of Baldringham

could afford, to pass away the evening. Blessed by a grave old Saxon monk, the chaplain of the house, a sumptuous entertainment, which might have sufficed twenty hungry men, was served up before Ermengarde and her niece, whose sole assistants, besides the reverend man, were Berwine and Rose Flammock. Eveline was the less inclined to do justice to this excess of hospitality, that the dishes were all of the gross and substantial nature which the Saxons admired, but which contrasted disadvantageously with the refined and delicate cookery of the Normans, as did the moderate cup of light and high-flavoured Gascon wine, tempered with more than half its quantity of the purest water, with the mighty ale, the high-spiced pigment and hippocras, and the other potent liquors, which, one after another, were in vain proffered for her acceptance by the steward Hundwolf, in honour of the hospitality of Baldringham.

Neither were the stated amusements of the evening more congenial to Eveline's taste, than the profusion of her aunt's solid refection. When the boards and tresses, on which the viands had been served, were withdrawn from the apartment, the

menials, under directions of the steward, proceeded to light several long waxen torches, one of which was graduated for the purpose of marking the passing time, and dividing it into portions. These were announced by means of brazen balls, suspended by threads from the torch, the spaces betwixt them being calculated to occupy a certain time in burning; so that, when the flame reached the thread, and the balls fell, each in succession, into a brazen basin placed for its reception, the office of a modern clock was in some degree discharged. By this light the party was arranged for the evening.

The ancient Ermengarde's lofty and ample chair was removed, according to ancient custom, from the middle of the apartment to the warmest side of a large grate, filled with charcoal, and her guest was placed on her right, as the seat of honour. Berwine then arranged in due order the females of the household, and, having seen that each was engaged with her own proper task, sat herself down to ply the spindle and distaff. The men, in a more remote circle, betook themselves to the repair-

ing of their implements of husbandry, or new furbishing weapons of the chase, under direction of the steward Hundwolf. For the amusement of the family thus assembled, an old glee-man sung to a harp, which had but four strings, a long and apparently interminable legend, upon some religious subject, which was rendered almost unintelligible to Eveline, by the extreme and complicated affectation of the poet, who, in order to indulge in the alliteration which was accounted one great ornament of Saxon poetry, had sacrificed sense to sound, and used words in the most forced and remote sense, provided they could be compelled into his service. There was also all the obscurity arising from elision, and from the most extravagant and hyperbolical epithets.

Eveline, though well acquainted with the Saxon language, soon left off listening to the singer, to reflect, for a moment, on the gay *fabliaux* and imaginative *lais* of the Norman minstrels, and then to anticipate, with anxious apprehension, what nature of visitation she might be exposed to in the mysterious chamber in which she was doomed to pass the night.

The hour of parting at length approached. At half an hour before midnight, a period ascertained by the consumption of the huge waxen torch, the ball which was secured to it fell clanging into the brazen basin placed beneath, and announced to all the hour of rest. The old glee-man paused in his song, instantaneously, and in the middle of a stanza, and the household were all upon foot at the signal, some retiring to their own apartments, others lighting torches or bearing lamps to conduct the visitors to their places of repose. Among these last was a bevy of bower-women, to whom the duty was assigned of conveying the Lady Eveline to her chamber for the night. Her aunt took a solemn leave of her, crossed her forehead, kissed it, and whispered in her ear, "Be courageous, and be fortunate."

"May not my bower-maiden, Rose Flammock, or my tire-woman, Dame Gillian, Raoul's wife, remain in the apartment with me for this night?" said Eveline.

"Flammock—Raoul!" repeated Ermengarde, angrily; "is thy household thus made up? The

Flemings are the cold palsy to Britain, the Normans the burning fever."

"And the poor Welch will add," said Rose, whose resentment began to surpass her awe for the ancient Saxon dame, "that the Anglo-Saxons were the original disease, and resemble a wasting pestilence."

"Thou art too bold, sweetheart," said the Lady Ermengarde, looking at the Flemish maiden from under her dark brows; "and yet there is wit in thy words. Saxon, Dane, and Norman, have rolled like successive billows over the land, each having strength to subdue what they lacked wisdom to keep. When shall it be otherwise!"

"When Saxon, and Briton, and Norman, and Fleming," answered Rose boldly, "shall learn to call themselves by one name, and think themselves alike children of the land they are born in."

"Ha!" exclaimed the Lady of Baldringham, in the tone of one half-surprised, half-pleased. Then turning to her relation, she said, "Thou hast words and wit in that maiden; see that she use, but do not abuse them."

"She is as kind and faithful, as she is prompt andready-witted," said Eveline. "I pray you, dearest aunt, let me use her company for this night."

"It may not be—it were dangerous to both. Alone you must learn your destiny, as have all the females of our race, excepting your grandmother; and what have been the consequences of her neglecting the rules of our house? Lo! her descendant stands before me an orphan, in the very bloom of youth."

"I will go then," said Eveline, with a sigh of resignation; "it shall never be said I caused future woe, to shun pres ent terror."

"Your attendants," said the Lady Ermengarde, "may occupy the anti-room, and be almost within your call. Berwine will shew you the apartment—I cannot; for *we*, thou knowest, who have once entered it, return not thither again. Farewell, my child, and may Heaven bless thee!"

With more of human emotion and sympathy than she had yet shewn, the lady again saluted Eveline, and signed to her to follow Berwine, who, attended by two damsels bearing torches, waited to conduct her to the dreaded apartment.

Their torches glared along the rudely built walls and dark arched roofs of one or two long winding passages; then by their light enabled them to descend the steps of a winding stair, whose inequality and ruggedness shewed its antiquity; and finally led into a tolerably large chamber on the lower story of the edifice, to which some old hangings, a lively fire on the hearth, the moon-beams stealing through a latticed window, and the boughs of a myrtle plant which grew around the casement, gave no uncomfortable appearance.

"This," said Berwine, "is the resting place of your attendants," and she pointed to the couches which had been prepared for Rose and Dame Gillian; "we," she added, "proceed farther."

She then took a torch from the attendant maidens, both of whom seemed to shrink back with fear, which was readily caught by Dame Gillian, although she was not probably aware of the cause. But Rose Flammock, unbidden, followed her mistress without hesitation, as Berwine conducted her through a small wicket at the upper end of the apartment, clenched with many an iron

nail, into a second but smaller anti-room or wardrobe, at the end of which was a similar door. This wardrobe had also its casement mantled with evergreens, and, like the former, it was faintly enlightened by the moon-beam.

Berwine paused here, and pointing to Rose, demanded of Eveline, "Why does *she* follow?"

"To share my mistress's danger, be it what it may," answered Rose, with her characteristic readiness of speech and resolution. "Speak," she said "my dearest lady," grasping Eveline's hand, while she addressed her; "you will not drive your Rose from you? If I am less high-minded than one of your boasted race, I am bold and quick-witted in all honest service.—You tremble like the aspen! Do not go into this apartment—do not be gulled by all this pomp and mystery of terrible preparation; bid defiance to this antiquated, and, I think, half-pagan superstition."

"The Lady Eveline must go, minion," replied Berwine sternly; "and she must go without any malapert adviser or companion."

"Must go—*must* go," repeated Rose; "Is this language to a free and noble maiden?—Sweet lady,

give me once but the least hint that you wish it, and their '*must* go' shall be put to the trial. I will call from the casement on the Norman cavaliers, and tell them we have fallen into a den of witches, instead of a house of hospitality."

"Silence, madwoman," said Berwine, her voice quivering with anger and fear; "you know not who dwells in the next chamber!"

"I will call those who will soon see to that," said Rose, flying to the casement, when Eveline, seizing her arm in her turn, compelled her to stop.

"I thank thy kindness, Rose," she said, "but it cannot help me in this matter. She who enters yonder door, must do so alone."

"Then I will enter it in your stead, my dearest lady," said Rose. "You are pale—you are cold—you will die of terror if you go on. There may be as much of trick as of supernatural agency, in this matter—me they shall not deceive—or if some stern spirit craves a victim,—better Rose than her lady."

"Forbear, forbear," said Eveline, rousing up

her own spirits, "you make me ashamed of myself. This is an ancient ordeal, which regards the females descended from the house of Baldringham as far as in the third degree, and them only. I did not indeed expect, in my present circumstances, to have been called upon to undergo it; but, since the hour summons me, I will meet it as freely as any of my ancestors."

So saying, she took the torch from the hand of Berwine, and wishing good night to her and Rose, gently disengaged herself from the hold of the latter, and advanced into the mysterious chamber. Rose pressed after her so far as to see that it was an apartment of moderate dimensions, resembling that through which they had last passed, and lighted by the moonbeams, which came through a window lying on the same range with those of the anti-rooms. More she could not see, for Eveline turned on the threshold, and kissing her at the same time, thrust her gently back into the smaller aparment which she had just left, shut the door of communication, and barred and bolted it, as if in security against her well-meant intrusion.

Berwine now exhorted Rose, as she valued her life, to retire into the first anti-room, where the beds were prepared, and betake herself, if not to rest, at least to silence and devotion; but the faithful Flemish girl stoutly refused her entreaties, and resisted her commands.

"Talk not to me of danger," she said; "here I remain, that I may be at least within hearing of my mistress's danger, and woe betide those who shall offer her injury!—Take notice, that twenty Norman spears surround this inhospitable dwelling, prompt to avenge whatsoever injury shall be offered to the daughter of Raymond Berenger."

"Reserve your threats for those who are mortal," said Berwine, in a low, but piercing whisper; "the owner of yonder chamber fears them not. Farewell—thy danger be on thine own head."

She departed, leaving Rose strangely agitated by what had passed, and somewhat appalled at her last words. "These Saxons," said the maiden within herself, "are but half converted after all, and hold many of their old hellish rites in the worship of elementary spirits. Their very saints are unlike

to the saints of any Christian country, and have, as it were, a look of something savage and fiendish. It is fearful being alone here—and all is silent as death in the apartment into which my lady has been thus strangely compelled. Shall I call up Gillian?—but no—she has neither sense, nor courage, nor principle, to aid me on such an occasion—better alone than have a false friend for company. I will see if the Normans are on their post, since it is to them I must trust, if a moment of need should arrive."

Thus reflecting, Rose Flammock went to the window of the little apartment, in order to satisfy herself of the vigilance of the sentinels, and to ascertain the exact situation of the corps de garde. The moon was at the full, and enabled her to see with accuracy the nature of the ground without. In the first place, she was rather disappointed to find, that instead of being so near the earth as she supposed, the range of windows, which gave light as well to the two anti-rooms as to the mysterious chamber itself, looked down upon an ancient moat, by which they were divided from the level ground on the farther side. The defence which this fosse

afforded seemed to have been long neglected, and the bottom, entirely dry, was choked in many places with bushes and low trees, which rose up against the wall of the castle, and by means of which it seemed to Rose the windows might be easily scaled, and the mansion entered. From the level plain beyond, the space adjoining to the castle was in a considerable degree clear, and the moonbeams slumbered on its close and beautiful turf, mixed with long shadows of the towers and trees. Beyond this esplanade lay the forest ground, with a few gigantic oaks scattered individually along the skirt of its dark and ample domain, like champions, which take their ground of defiance in front of a line of arrayed battle.

The calm beauty and repose of a scene so lovely, the stillness of all around, and the more matured reflections which the whole suggested, quieted, in some measure, the apprehensions which the events of the evening had inspired. "After all," she reflected, "why should I be so anxious on account of the Lady Eveline? There is among the proud Normans and the dogged Saxons scarce a family

of note, but must needs be held distinguished from others by some superstitious observance peculiar to their race, as if they thought it scorn to go to heaven like a poor simple Fleming, such as I am.—Could I but see a Norman sentinel, I would hold myself satisfied of my mistress's security.—And yonder, one stalks along the gloom, wrapt in his long white mantle, and the moon tipping the point of his lance with silver.—What, ho, Sir Cavalier!"

The Norman turned his steps, and approached the ditch as she spoke. "What is your pleasure, damsel?" he demanded.

"The window next to mine is that of the Lady Eveline Berenger, whom you are appointed to guard. Please to give heedful watch upon this side of the castle."

"Doubt it not, lady," answered the cavalier; and, enveloping himself in his long *chappe*, or military watch-cloak, he withdrew to a large oak-tree at some distance, and stood there with folded arms, and leaning on his lance, more like a trophy of armour than a living warrior.

Emboldened by the consciousness, that in case of need succour was close at hand, Rose drew back into her little chamber, and having ascertained, by listening, that there was no noise or stirring in that of Eveline, she began to make some preparations for her own repose. For this purpose she went into the outward anti-room, where Dame Gillian, whose fears had given way to the soporiferous effects of a copious draught of *lithe-alos*, (mild ale, of the first strength and quality,) slept as sound a sleep as that generous Saxon beverage could procure.

Muttering an indignant censure on her sloth and indifference, Rose caught, from the empty couch which had been destined for her own use, the upper covering, and dragging it with her into the inner anti-room, disposed it so as, with the assistance of the rushes which strewed the apartment, to form a sort of couch, upon which, half-seated, half-reclined, she resolved to pass the night in as close attendance upon her mistress as circumstances permitted.

Thus seated, her eye on the pale planet which

sailed in full glory through the blue sky of midnight, she proposed to herself that sleep should not visit her eyelids till the dawn of morning should assure her of Eveline's safety.

Her thoughts, meanwhile, rested on the boundless and shadowy world beyond the grave, and on the great and perhaps yet undecided question, whether the separation of its inhabitants from those of this temporal sphere is absolute and decided, or whether, influenced by motives which we cannot appreciate, they continue to hold shadowy communication with those yet existing in earthly reality of flesh and blood? To have denied this, would, in the age of crusades and of miracles, have incurred the guilt of heresy; but Rose's firm good sense led her to doubt at least the frequency of supernatural interference, and she comforted herself with an opinion, contradicted, however, by her own involuntary starts and shudderings at every leaf which moved, that, in submitting to performance of the rite imposed on her, Eveline incurred no real danger, and only sacrificed to an obsolete family superstition.

As this conviction strengthened on Rose's mind, her purpose of vigilance began to decline—her thoughts wandered to objects towards which they were not directed, like sheep which stray beyond the charge of their shepherd—her eyes no longer brought back to her a distinct apprehension of the broad, round, silvery orb on which they continued to gaze. At length they closed, and, seated on the folded mantle, her back resting against the wall of the apartment, and her white arms folded on her bosom, Rose Flammock fell fast asleep.

Her repose was fearfully broken by a shrill and piercing shriek from the apartment where her lady reposed. To start up and fly to the door was the work of a moment with the generous girl, who never permitted fear to struggle with love or duty. The door was secured with both bar and bolt; and another fainter scream, or rather groan, seemed to say, aid must be instant, or in vain. Rose next rushed to the window, and screamed rather than called to the Norman soldier, who, distinguished by the white folds of his watch-cloak, still retained his position under the old oak-tree.

At the cry of "Help, help!—the Lady Eveline is murdered!" the seeming statue, starting at once into active exertion, sped with the swiftness of a race-horse to the brink of the moat, and was about to cross it, opposite to the spot where Rose stood at the open casement, urging him to speed by voice and gesture.

"Not here—not here!" she exclaimed with breathless precipitation, as she saw him make towards her—"the window to the right—scale it, for God's sake, and undo the door of communication!"

The soldier seemed to comprehend her—he dashed into the moat without hesitation, securing himself by catching at the boughs of trees as he descended. In one moment he vanished among the underwood; and in another, availing himself of the branches of a dwarf oak, Rose saw him upon her right, and close to the window of the fatal apartment. One fear remained—the casement might be secured against entrance from without—but no! at the thrust of the Norman it yielded, and its clasps or fastenings being worn

with time, fell inward with a clash which even Dame Gillian's slumbers were unable to resist.

Echoing scream upon scream, in the usual fashion of fools and cowards, she entered the cabinet from the anti-room, just as the door of Eveline's chamber opened, and the soldier appeared, bearing in his arms the half-undressed and lifeless form of the Norman maiden herself. Without speaking a word, he placed her in Rose's arms, and with the same precipitation with which he had entered, threw himself out of the opened window from which Rose had summoned him.

Gillian, half distracted with fear and wonder, heaped exclamations on questions, and mingled questions with cries for help, till Rose sternly rebuked her, in a tone which seemed to recal her scattered senses. She became then composed enough to fetch a lamp which remained lighted in the room she had left, and to render herself at least partly useful in suggesting and applying the usual modes for recalling the suspended sense. In this they at length succeeded, for Eveline fetched a fuller sigh, and opened her eyes; but presently shut them again, and letting her head drop on

Rose's bosom, fell into a strong shuddering fit; while her faithful damsel, chafing her hands and her temples alternately with affectionate assiduity, and mingling caresses with these efforts, exclaimed aloud, "She lives!—She is recovering!—Praised be God!"

"Praised be God!" was echoed in a solemn tone from the window of the apartment; and turning towards it in terror, Rose beheld the armed and plumed head of the soldier who had come so opportunely to their assistance, and who, supported by his arms, had raised himself so high as to be able to look into the interior of the cabinet.

Rose immediately ran towards him. "Go—go—good friend," she said; "your reward shall await you another time. Go—begone!—yet stay—keep on your post, and I will call you if there is farther need. Begone—be faithful, and be secret."

The soldier obeyed without answering a word, and she presently saw him descend into the moat. Rose then returned back to her mistress, whom she found supported by Gillian, moaning feebly, and muttering hurried and unintelligible ejacula-

tions, all intimating that she laboured under a violent shock sustained from some alarming cause.

Dame Gillian had no sooner recovered some degree of self-possession, than her curiosity became active in proportion. "What means all this?" she said to Rose; "what has been doing among you?"

"I do not know," replied Rose.

"If you do not," said Gillian, "who should?—Shall I call the other women, and raise the house?"

"Not for your life," said Rose, "till my lady is able to give her own orders; and for this apartment, so help me Heaven, as I will do my best to discover the secrets it contains!—Support my mistress the whilst."

So saying, she took the lamp in her hand, and crossing her brow, stepped boldly across the mysterious threshold, and holding up the light, surveyed the apartment.

It was merely an old vaulted chamber, of very moderate dimensions. In one corner was an image of the Virgin, rudely cut, and placed above a Saxon font of curious workmanship. There were

two seats, and a couch, covered with coarse tapestry, on which it seemed that Eveline had been reposing. The fragments of the shattered casement lay on the floor; but that opening had been only made when the soldier forced it in, and she saw no other access by which a stranger could have entered an apartment, the ordinary entrance of which was barred and bolted.

Rose felt the influence of those terrors which she had hitherto surmounted; she cast her mantle hastily around her head, as if to shroud her sight from some blighting vision, and tripping back to the cabinet, with more speed and a less firm step than when she left it, she directed Gillian to lend her assistance in conveying Eveline to the next room; and having done so, carefully secured the door of communication, as if to put a barrier betwixt them and the suspected danger.

The Lady Eveline was now so far recovered that she could sit up, and was trying to speak, though but faintly. "Rose," she said at length, "I have seen her—my doom is sealed."

Rose immediately recollected the imprudence

of suffering Gillian to hear what her mistress might say at such an awful moment, and hastily adopting the proposal she had before declined, desired her to go and call other two maidens of their mistress's household.

"And where am I to find them in this house," said Dame Gillian, "where strange men run about one chamber at midnight, and devils, for aught I know, frequent the rest of the house?"

"Find them where you can," said Rose, sharply; "but begone presently."

Gillian withdrew lingeringly, and muttering at the same time something which could not distinctly be understood. No sooner was she gone, than Rose, giving way to the enthusiastic affection which she felt for her mistress, implored her, in the most tender terms, to open her eyes, (for she had again closed them,) and speak to Rose, her own Rose, who was ready, if necessary, to die by her mistress's side.

"To-morrow—to-morrow, Rose," murmured Eveline—"I cannot speak at present."

"Only disburthen your mind with one word—

tell what has thus alarmed you—what danger you apprehend."

"I have seen her," answered Eveline—"I have seen the tenant of yonder chamber—the vision fatal to my race!—Urge me no more—to-morrow you shall know all."

As Gillian entered with two of the maidens of her mistress's household, they removed the Lady Eveline, by Rose's directions, into a chamber at some distance, which the latter had occupied, and placed her in one of their beds, where Rose, dismissing the others, (Gillian excepted) to seek repose where they could find it, continued to watch her mistress. For some time she continued very much disturbed, but, gradually, fatigue, and the influence of some narcotic which Gillian had sense enough to recommend and prepare, seemed to compose her spirits. She fell into a deep slumber, from which she did not awaken until the sun was high over the distant hills.

CHAPTER XV.

> I see a hand you cannot see,
> Which beckons me away;
> I hear a voice you cannot hear,
> Which says I must not stay.
>
> MALLET.

WHEN Eveline first opened her eyes, it seemed to be without any recollection of what had passed on the night preceding. She looked round the apartment, which was coarsely and scantily furnished, as one destined for the use of domestics and menials, and said to Rose, with a smile, "Our good kinswoman maintains the ancient Saxon hospitality at a homely rate, so far as lodging is concerned. I could have willingly parted with last night's profuse supper, to have obtained a bed of a softer texture. Methinks my limbs feel as if I had been under all the flails of a Franklin's barn-yard."

"I am glad to see you so pleasant, madam," answered Rose, discreetly avoiding any reference to the events of the night before.

Dame Gillian was not so scrupulous. "Your ladyship last night lay down on a better bed than this," she said, "unless I am much mistaken; and Rose Flammock and yourself know best why you left it."

If a look could have killed, Dame Gillian would have been in deadly peril from that which Rose shot at her, by way of rebuke for this ill-advised communication. It had instantly the effect which was to be apprehended, for Lady Eveline seemed at first surprised and confused; then, as recollections of the past arranged themselves in her memory, she folded her hands, looked on the ground, and wept bitterly, with much agitation.

Rose entreated her to be comforted, and offered to fetch the old Saxon chaplain of the house to administer spiritual consolation, if her grief rejected temporal comfort.

"No—call him not," said Eveline, raising her head and drying her eyes—"I have had enough

of Saxon kindness. What a fool was I to expect, in that hard and unfeeling woman, any commiseration for my youth—my late sufferings—my orphan condition! I will not permit her a poor triumph over the Norman blood of Berenger, by letting her see how much I have suffered under her inhuman infliction. But first, Rose, answer me truly, was any inmate of Baldringham witness to my distress last night?"

Rose assured her that she had been tended exclusively by her own retinue, herself and Gillian, Blanche and Ternotte. She seemed to receive satisfaction from this assurance. "Hear me, both of you," she said, "and observe my words, as you love and as you fear me. Let no syllable be breathed from your lips of what has happened this night. Carry the same charge to my maidens. Lend me thine instant aid, Gillian, and thine, my dearest Rose, to change these disordered garments, and arrange this dishevelled hair. It was a poor vengeance she sought, and all because of my country. I am resolved she shall not see the slightest trace of the sufferings she has inflicted."

As she spoke thus, her eyes flashed with indig-

nation, which seemed to dry up the tears that had before filled them. Rose saw the change of her manner with a mixture of pleasure and concern, being aware that her mistress's predominant failing was incident to her, as a spoiled child, who, accustomed to be treated with kindness, deference, and indulgence, by all around her, was apt to resent warmly whatever resembled neglect or contradiction.

"God knows," said the faithful bower-maiden, "I would hold my hand out to catch drops of molten lead, rather than endure your tears; and yet, my sweet mistress, I would rather at present see you grieved than angry. This ancient lady hath, it would seem, but acted according to some old superstitious rite of her family, which is in part yours. Her name is respectable, both from her conduct and possessions; and, hard-pressed as you are by the Normans, with whom your kinswoman, the Prioress, is sure to take part, I was in hope you might have had some shelter and countenance from the Lady of Baldringham."

"Never, Rose, never," answered Eveline; "you know not—you cannot guess what she has

made me suffer—exposing me to witchcraft and fiends. Thyself said it, and said it truly—the Saxons are still half Pagans, void of christianity, as of nurture and kindliness."

"Ay, but," replied Rose, "I spoke then to dissuade you from a danger;—now that the danger is passed and over, I may judge of it otherwise."

"Speak not for them, Rose," replied Eveline, angrily; "no innocent victim was ever offered up at the altar of a fiend with more indifference than my father's kinswoman delivered up me—me an orphan, bereaved of my natural and powerful support. I hate her cruelty—I hate her house—I hate the thought of all that has happened here—of all, Rose, except thy matchless faith and fearless attachment. Go, bid our train saddle directly—I will be gone instantly—I will not attire myself," she added, rejecting the assistance she had at first required—"I will have no ceremony—tarry for no leave-taking."

In the hurried and agitated manner of her mistress, Rose recognized with anxiety another mood of the same irritable and excited temperament,

which had before discharged itself in tears and fits. But perceiving, at the same time, that remonstrance was in vain, she gave the necessary orders for collecting their company, saddling, and preparing for departure; hoping, that as her mistress removed to a farther distance from the scene where her mind had received so severe a shock, her equanimity might, by degrees, be restored.

Dame Gillian, accordingly, was busied with arranging the packages of her lady, and all the rest of Lady Eveline's retinue in preparing for instant departure, when, preceded by her steward, who acted also as a sort of gentleman usher, leaning upon her confidential Berwine, and followed by two or three more of the most distinguished of her household, with looks of displeasure on her ancient yet lofty brow, the Lady Ermengarde entered the apartment.

Eveline, with a trembling and hurried hand, a burning cheek, and other signs of agitation, was herself busied about the arrangement of some baggage, when her relation made her appearance. At once, to Rose's great surprise, she exerted a

strong command over herself, and repressing every external appearance of disorder, she advanced to meet her relation, with a calm and haughty stateliness equal to her own.

"I come to give you good morning, our niece," said Ermengarde, haughtily indeed, yet with more deference than she seemed at first to have intended, so much did the bearing of Eveline impose respect upon her;—"I find that you have been pleased to shift that chamber which was assigned you, in conformity with the ancient custom of this household, and betake yourself to the apartment of a menial."

"Are you surprised at that, lady?" demanded Eveline in her turn; "or are you disappointed that you find me not a corpse, within the limits of the chamber which your hospitality and affection allotted to me?"

"Your sleep, then, has been broken?" said Ermengarde, looking fixedly at the Lady Eveline, as she spoke.

"If I complain not, madam, the evil must be deemed of little consequence. What has hap-

pened, is over and past, and it is not my intention to trouble you with the recital."

"She of the ruddy finger," replied Ermengarde, triumphantly, "loves not the blood of the stranger."

"She had less reason, while she walked the earth, to love that of the Saxon," said Eveline, "unless her legend speaks false in that matter; and unless, as I well suspect, your house is haunted, not by the soul of the dead who suffered within its walls, but by evil spirits, such as the descendants of Hengist and Horsa are said still in secret to worship."

"You are pleasant, maiden," replied the old lady scornfully, "or, if your words are meant in earnest, the shaft of your censure has glanced aside. A house, blessed by the holy Saint Dunstan, and by the royal and holy Confessor, is no abode for evil spirits."

"The house of Baldringham," replied Eveline, "is no abode for those who fear such spirits; and as I will, with all humility, avow myself of the number, I will presently leave it to the custody of Saint Dunstan."

"Not till you have broken your fast, I trust?" said the Lady of Baldringham; "you will not, I hope, do my years and our relationship such foul disgrace?"

"Pardon me, madam," replied the Lady Eveline, "those who have experienced your hospitality at night, have little occasion for breakfast in the morning.—Rose, are not those loitering knaves assembled in the courtyard, or are they yet on their couches, making up for the slumber they have lost by midnight disturbances?"

Rose announced that her train was in the court, and mounted; when, with a low reverence, Eveline endeavoured to pass her relation, and leave the apartment without farther ceremony. Ermengarde at first confronted her with a grim and furious glance, which seemed to shew a soul fraught with more rage than the thin blood and rigid features of extreme old age had the power of expressing, and raised her ebony staff as if about even to proceed to some act of personal violence. But she changed her purpose, and suddenly made way for Eveline, who passed without further parley; and as she de-

scended the staircase, which conducted from the apartment to the gateway, she heard the voice of her aunt behind her, like that of an aged and offended sibyl, denouncing wrath and woe upon her insolence and presumption.

"Pride," she exclaimed, "goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. She who scorneth the house of her forefathers, a stone from its battlements shall crush her! She who mocks the grey hairs of a parent, never shall one of her own locks be silvered with age! She who weds with a man of war and of blood, her end shall neither be peaceful nor bloodless!"

Hurrying to escape from these and other ominous denunciations, Eveline rushed from the house, mounted her palfrey with the precipitation of a fugitive, and, surrounded by her attendants, who had caught a part of her alarm, though without conjecturing the cause, rode hastily into the forest; old Raoul, who was well acquainted with the country, acting as their guide.

Agitated more than she was willing to confess to herself, by thus leaving the habitation of so

near a relation, loaded with maledictions, instead of the blessings which are usually bestowed on a departing kinswoman, Eveline hastened forward, until the huge oak trees with intervening arms had hidden from her view the fatal mansion.

The trampling and galloping of horse was soon after heard, announcing the approach of the patrol left by the Constable for the protection of the mansion, and who now, collecting from their different stations, came prepared to attend Lady Eveline on her farther road to Gloucester, great part of which lay through the extensive forest of Deane, then a sylvan region of large extent, though now much denuded of trees for the service of the iron mines. The cavaliers came up to join the retinue of Lady Eveline, with armour glittering in the morning rays, trumpets sounding, horses prancing, neighing, and thrown, each by his chivalrous rider, into the attitude best qualified to exhibit the beauty of the steed and dexterity of the horseman; while their lances, streaming with long penoncelles, were brandished in every manner which could display elation of heart and readiness of hand. The sense of the military character of her countrymen of

Normandy gave to Eveline a feeling at once of security and of triumph, which operated towards the dispelling of her gloomy thoughts, and of the feverish disorder which affected her nerves. The rising sun also—the song of the birds among the bowers—the lowing of the cattle as they were driven to pasture—the sight of the hind, who, with her fawn trotting by her side, often crossed some forest glade within view of the travellers,—all contributed to dispel the terror of Eveline's nocturnal visions, and soothe to rest the more angry passions which had agitated her bosom at her departure from Baldringham. She suffered her palfrey to slacken his pace, and, with female attention to propriety, began to adjust her riding robes, and compose her head-dress, disordered in her hasty departure. Rose saw her cheek assume a paler but more settled hue, instead of the angry hectic which had coloured it—saw her eye become more steady as she looked with a sort of triumph upon her military attendants, and pardoned (what on other occasions she would probably have made some reply to) her enthusiastic exclamations in praise of her countrymen.

"We journey safe," said Eveline, "under the care of the princely and victorious Normans. Theirs is the noble wrath of the lion, which destroys or is appeased at once—there is no guile in their romantic affection, no sullenness mixed with their generous indignation—they know the duties of the hall as well as those of battle; and were they to be surpassed in the arts of war, (which will only be when Plinlimmon is removed from its base,) they would still remain superior to every other people in generosity and courtesy."

"If I do not feel all their merits so strongly as if I shared their blood," said Rose, "I am at least glad to see them around us, in woods which are said to abound with dangers of various kinds. And I confess, my heart is the lighter, that I can now no longer observe the least vestige of that ancient mansion, in which we passed so unpleasant a night, and the recollection of which will always be odious to me."

Eveline looked sharply at her. "Confess the truth, Rose; thou wouldst give thy best kirtle to know all of my horrible adventure."

"It is but confessing that I am a woman," answered Rose; "and did I say a man, I dare say the difference of sex would imply but a small abatement of curiosity."

"Thou makest no parade of other feelings, which prompt thee to inquire into my fortunes," said Eveline; "but, sweet Rose, I give thee not the less credit for them. Believe me, thou shalt know all—but, I think, not now."

"At your pleasure," said Rose; "and yet, methinks, the bearing in your solitary bosom such a fearful secret will only render the weight more intolerable. On my silence you may rely as on that of the Holy Image, which hears us confess what it never reveals. Besides, such things become familiar to the imagination when they have been spoken of, and that which is familiar gradually becomes stripped of its terrors."

"Thou speakest with reason, my prudent Rose; and surely in this gallant troop, borne like a flower on a bush by my good palfrey Yseulte—fresh gales blowing round us, flowers opening and birds singing, and having thee by my bridle-rein, I ought to feel this a fitting time to communicate

what thou hast so good a title to know. And—yes!—thou shalt know all!—Thou art not, I presume, ignorant of the qualities of what the Saxons of this land call a *Bahr-geist?*"

"Pardon me, lady," answered Rose, "my father discouraged my listening to such discourses. I might see evil spirits enough, he said, without my imagination being taught to form such as were fantastical. The word Bahr-geist, I have heard used by Gillian and other Saxons; but to me it only conveys some idea of indefinite terror, of which I have never asked nor received an explanation."

"Know then," said Eveline, "it is a spectre, usually the image of a departed person, who, either for wrong sustained in a certain place during life, or through treasure hidden there, or from some such other cause, haunts the spot from time to time, becomes familiar to those who dwell there, takes an interest in their fate, occasionally for good, in other instances or times for evil. The Bahr-geist is, therefore, sometimes regarded as the good genius, sometimes as the avenging fiend, attached to particular families and classes of men. It is the lot of the family of Baldringham, (of no

mean note in other respects,) to be subject to the visits of such a being."

"May I ask the cause (if it be known) of such visitation?" said Rose, desirous to avail herself to the uttermost of the communicative mood of her young lady, which might not perhaps last very long.

"I know the legend but imperfectly," replied Eveline, proceeding with a degree of calmness, the result of strong exertion over her mental anxiety, "but in general it runs thus:—Baldrick, the Saxon hero who first possessed yonder dwelling, became enamoured of a fair Briton, said to have been descended from those Druids of whom the Welch speak so much, and deemed not unacquainted with the arts of sorcery which they practised, when they offered up human sacrifices amid those circles of unhewn and living rock, of which thou hast seen so many. After more than two years wedlock, Baldrick became weary of his wife to such a point, that he formed the cruel resolution of putting her to death. Some say he doubted her fidelity—some that the matter was pressed on him by the church, as she was suspected of he-

resy—some that he removed her to make way for a more wealthy marriage—but all agree in the result. He sent two of his Cnichts to the house of Baldringham, to put to death the unfortunate Vanda, and commanded them to bring him the ring which had circled her finger on the day of wedlock, in token that his orders were accomplished. The men were ruthless in their office, they strangled Vanda in yonder apartment, and as the hand was so swollen that no effort could bring off the ring, they obtained possession of it by severing the finger. But long before the return of those cruel perpetrators of her death, the shadow of Vanda had appeared before her appalled husband, and holding up to him her bloody hand, made him fearfully sensible how well his savage commands had been obeyed. After haunting him in peace and war, in desert, court, and camp, until he died despairingly on a pilgrimage to the Holy-land, the Bahr-geist, or ghost of the murdered Vanda, became so terrible in the House of Baldringham, that the succour of Saint Dunstan was itself scarcely sufficient to put bounds to her visitation. Yea, the blessed saint, when he had suc-

ceeded in his exorcism, did, in requital of Baldrick's crime, impose a strong and enduring penalty upon every female descendant of the house in the third degree; namely, that once in their lives, and before their twenty-first year, they should each spend a solitary night in the chamber of the murdered Vanda, saying therein certain prayers, as well for her repose, as for the suffering soul of her murderer. During that awful space, it is generally believed that the spirit of the murdered person appears to the female who observes the vigil, and shews some sign of her future good or bad fortune. If favourable, she appears with a smiling aspect, and crosses them with her unbloodied hand; but she announces evil fortune by shewing the hand from which the finger was severed, with a stern countenance, as if resenting upon the descendant of her husband his inhuman cruelty. Sometimes she is said to speak. These particulars I learned long since from an old Saxon dame, the mother of our Marjorie, who had been an attendant on my grandmother, and left the House of Baldringham when she made her escape from it with my father's father."

"Did your grandmother ever render this homage," said Rose, "which seems to me—under favour of Saint Dunstan—to bring humanity into too close intercourse with a being of a doubtful nature?"

"My grandfather thought so, and never permitted my grandmother to revisit the House of Baldringham after her marriage; hence disunion betwixt him and his son on the one part, and the members of that family on the other. They laid sundry misfortunes, and particularly the loss of male heirs which at that time befell them, to my mother's not having done the hereditary homage to the bloody-fingered Bahr-geist."

"And how could you, my dearest lady," said Rose, "knowing that they held among them an usage so hideous, think of accepting the invitation of Lady Ermengarde?"

"I can hardly answer you the question. Partly I feared my father's recent calamity, to be slain (as I have heard him say his aunt once prophesied of him) by the enemy he most despised, might be the result of this rite having been neglected—and partly I hoped, that if my mind

should be appalled at the danger, when it presented itself closer to my eye, it could not be urged on me in courtesy and humanity. You saw how soon my cruel-hearted relative pounced upon the opportunity, and how impossible it became for me, bearing the name, and, I trust, the spirit of Berenger, to escape from the net in which I had involved myself."

"No regard for name or rank should have engaged me," replied Rose, "to place myself where apprehension alone, even without the terrors of a real visitation, might have punished my presumption with insanity. But what, in the name of Heaven, did you see at this horrible rendezvous?"

"Ay, there is the question," said Eveline, raising her hand to her brow—"how I could witness that which I distinctly saw, yet be able to retain command of thought and intellect!—I had recited the prescribed devotions for the murderer and his victim, and sitting down on the couch which was assigned me, had laid aside such of my clothes as might impede my rest—I had surmounted, in short, the first shock which I experienced in committing myself to this mysterious chamber, and I

hoped to pass the night in slumber as sound as my thoughts were innocent. But I was fearfully disappointed. I cannot judge how long I had slept, when my bosom was oppressed by an unusual weight, which seemed at once to stifle my voice, stop the beating of my heart, and prevent me from drawing my breath; and when I looked up to discover the cause of this horrible suffocation, the form of the murdered British matron stood over my couch, taller than life, shadowy, and with a countenance where traits of dignity and beauty were mingled with a fierce expression of vengeful exultation. She held over me the hand which bore the bloody marks of her husband's cruelty, and seemed as if she signed the cross, devoting me to destruction; while with an unearthly tone she uttered these words:—

> Widow'd wife and married maid,
> Betroth'd, betrayer, and betray'd!

The phantom stooped over me as she spoke, and lowered her gory fingers, as if to touch my face, when terror giving me the power of which at first it deprived me, I screamed aloud—the casement of

the apartment was thrown open with a loud noise —and—But what signifies my telling all this to thee, Rose, who shew so plainly, by the movement of eye and lip, that you consider me as a silly and childish dreamer!"

"Be not angry, my dear lady," said Rose; "I do indeed believe that the witch we call Mara* has been dealing with you; but she, you know, is by leeches considered as no real phantom, but solely the creation of our own imagination, disordered by causes which arise from bodily indisposition."

"Thou art learned, maiden," said Eveline, rather peevishly; "but when I assure thee that my better angel came to my assistance in a human form—that at his appearance the fiend vanished —and that he transported me in his arms out of the chamber of terror, I think thou wilt, as a good Christian, put more faith in that which I tell you."

"Indeed, indeed, my sweetest mistress, I cannot," replied Rose. "It is even that circumstance of the guardian angel which makes me consider the whole as a dream. A Norman sentinel, whom

* Ephialtes, or Nightmare.

I myself called from his post on purpose, did indeed come to your assistance, and, breaking into your apartment, transported you to that where I myself received you from his arms in a lifeless condition."

"A Norman soldier, ha!" said Eveline, colouring extremely; "and to whom, maiden, did you dare give commission to break into my sleeping-chamber?"

"Your eyes flash anger, madam, but is it reasonable they should? — Did I not hear your screams of agony, and was I to stand fettered by ceremony at such a moment?—no more than if the castle had been on fire."

"I ask you again, Rose," said her mistress, still with discomposure, though less angrily than at first, "whom you directed to break into my apartment?"

"Indeed I know not, lady," said Rose; "for, besides that he was muffled in his mantle, little chance was there of my knowing his features, even had I seen them fully. But I can soon discover the cavalier; and I will set about it, that I may give him the reward I promised, and warn him to be silent and discreet in this matter."

"Do so," said Eveline; "and if you find him among those soldiers who attend us, I will indeed lean to thine opinion, and think that phantasy had the chief share in the evils I have endured the last night."

Rose struck her palfrey with the rod, and, accompanied by her mistress, rode up to Philip Guarine, the Constable's squire, who for the present commanded their little escort. "Good Guarine," she said, "I had talk with one of these sentinels last night from my window, and he did me some service, for which I promised him recompence—Will you inquire for the man, that I may pay him his guerdon?"

"Truly, I will owe him a guerdon also, pretty maiden," answered the squire; "for if a lance of them approached near enough the house to hold speech from the windows, he transgressed the precise orders of his watch."

"Tush! you must forgive that for my sake," said Rose. "I warrant, had I called on yourself, stout Guarine, I would have had influence to bring you under my chamber window."

Guarine laughed, and shrugged his shoulders. "True it is," he said, "when women are in place discipline is in danger."

He then went to make the necessary inquiries among his band, and returned with the assurance, that his soldiers, generally and severally, denied having approached the mansion of the Lady Ermengarde on the preceding night.

"Thou seest, Rose," said Eveline, with a significant look, to her attendant.

"The poor rogues are afraid of Guarine's severity," said Rose, "and dare not tell the truth —I shall have some one in private claiming the reward of me."

"I would I had the privilege myself, damsel," said Guarine; "but for these fellows, they are not so timorous as you suppose them, being even too ready to avouch their roguery when it hath less excuse—Besides, I promised them impunity.—Have you anything farther to order?"

"Nothing, good Guarine," said Eveline; "only this small donative to procure wine for thy soldiers, that they may spend the next night more merrily

than the last.—And now he is gone,—Maiden, thou must, I think, be now well aware, that what thou sawest was no earthly being?"

"I must believe mine own ears and eyes, madam," replied Rose.

"Do—but allow me the same privilege," answered Eveline. "Believe me that my deliverer (for so I must call him,) bore the features of one who neither was, nor could be, in the neighbourhood of Baldringham.—Tell me but one thing—What dost thou think of this extraordinary prediction—

> Widow'd wife and wedded maid,
> Betroth'd, betrayer, and betray'd?

Thou wilt say it is an idle invention of my brain—but think it for a moment the speech of a true diviner, and what wouldst thou say of it?"

"That you may be betrayed, my dearest lady, but never be a betrayer," answered Rose with animation.

Eveline reached her hand out to her friend, and, as she pressed affectionately that which Rose

gave in return, she whispered to her with energy, "I thank thee for the judgment, which my own heart confirms."

A cloud of dust now announced the approach of the Constable of Chester and his retinue, augmented by the attendance of his host Sir William Herbert, and some of his neighbours and kinsmen, who came to pay their respects to the orphan of the Garde Doloureuse, by which appellation Eveline was known upon her passage through their territory.

Eveline remarked, that, at their greeting, De Lacy looked with displeased surprise at the disarrangement of her dress and equipage, which her hasty departure from Baldringham had necessarily occasioned; and she was, on her part, struck with an expression of countenance which seemed to say, "I am not to be treated as an ordinary person, who may be received with negligence, and treated slightly with impunity." For the first time, she thought that, though always deficient in grace and beauty, the Constable's countenance was formed to express the more angry passions with

force and vivacity, and that she who shared his rank and name must lay her account with the implicit surrender of her will and wishes to those of an arbitrary lord and master.

But the cloud soon passed from the Constable's brow; and in the conversation which he afterwards maintained with Herbert and the other knights and gentlemen, who from time to time came to greet and accompany them for a little way on their journey, Eveline had occasion to admire his superiority, both of sense and expression, and to remark the attention and deference with which his words were listened to by men too high in rank, and too proud, readily to admit any pre-eminence that was not founded on acknowledged merit. The regard of women is generally much influenced by the estimation which an individual maintains in the opinion of men; and Eveline, when she concluded her journey in the Benedictine nunnery in Gloucester, could not think without respect upon the renowned warrior, and celebrated politician, whose acknowledged abilities appeared to place him above every one whom she

had seen approach him. His wife, Eveline thought, (and she was not without ambition,) if relinquishing some of those qualities in a husband which are in youth most captivating to the female imagination, must be still generally honoured and respected, and have contentment, if not romantic felicity, within her reach.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Lady Eveline remained nearly four months with her aunt, the Abbess of the Benedictine nunnery, under whose auspices the Constable of Chester saw his suit advance and prosper, as it would probably have done under that of the deceased Raymond Berenger her brother. It is probable, that, but for the supposed vision of the Virgin, and the vow of gratitude which that vision had called forth, the natural dislike of so young a person to a match so unequal in years, might have effectually opposed his success. Indeed Eveline, while honouring the Constable's virtues, doing justice to his high character, and admiring his talents, could never altogether divest herself of a secret fear of him, which, while it prevented her

from expressing any direct disapprobation of his addresses, caused her sometimes to shudder, she scarce knew why, at the idea of their becoming successful.

The ominous words, "betraying and betrayed," would then occur to her memory; and when her aunt (the period of the deepest mourning being elapsed) had fixed a period for her betrothal, she looked forward to it with a feeling of terror, for which she was unable to account to herself, and which, as well as the particulars of her dream, she concealed even from Father Aldrovand in the hours of confession. It was not aversion to the Constable—it was far less preference to any other suitor—it was one of those instinctive movements and emotions by which Nature seems to warn us of approaching danger, though furnishing no information respecting its nature, and suggesting no means of escaping from it.

So strong were these intervals of apprehension, that if they had been seconded by the remonstrances of Rose Flammock, as formerly, they might perhaps have led to Eveline's even yet

forming some resolution unfavourable to the suit of the Constable. But, still more zealous for her lady's honour than even for her happiness, Rose had strictly forborne every effort which could affect Eveline's purpose, when she had once expressed her approbation of De Lacy's addresses; and whatever she thought or anticipated concerning the proposed marriage, she seemed from that moment to consider it as an event which must necessarily take place.

De Lacy himself, as he learned more intimately to know the merit of the prize which he was desirous of possessing, looked forward with different feelings towards the union, than those with which he had first proposed the measure to Raymond Berenger. It was then a mere match of interest and convenience, which had occurred to the mind of a proud and politic feudal lord, as the best mode of consolidating the power and perpetuating the line of his family. Nor did even the splendour of Eveline's beauty make that impression upon De Lacy, which it was calculated to do on the fiery and impassioned chivalry of the age. He was past that

period of life when the wise are captivated by outward form, and might have said with truth, as well as with discretion, that he could have wished his beautiful bride several years older, and possessed of a more moderate portion of personal charms, in order to have rendered the match more fitted for his own age and disposition. This stoicism, however, vanished, when, on repeated interviews with his destined bride, he found that she was indeed inexperienced in life, but desirous to be guided by superior wisdom; and that, although gifted with high spirit, and a disposition which began to recover its natural elastic gaiety, she was gentle, docile, and, above all, endowed with a firmness of principle, which seemed to give assurance that she would tread uprightly, and without spot, the slippery paths in which youth, rank, and beauty, are doomed to move.

As feelings of a warmer and more impassioned kind towards Eveline began to glow in De Lacy's bosom, his engagements as a crusader became more and more burdensome to him. The Benedictine Abbess, the natural guardian of Eveline's

happiness, added to these feelings by her reasoning and remonstrances. Although a nun and a devotee, she held in reverence the holy state of matrimony, and comprehended so much of it as to be aware, that its important purposes could not be accomplished while the whole continent of Europe was interposed betwixt the married pair; for as to a hint from the Constable, that his young spouse might accompany him into the dangerous and dissolute precincts of the Crusaders' camp, the good lady crossed herself with horror at the proposal, and never permitted it to be a second time mentioned in her presence.

It was not, however, uncommon for kings, princes, and other persons of high consequence, who had taken upon them the vow to rescue Jerusalem, to obtain delays, and even a total remission of their engagement, by proper application to the Church of Rome. The Constable was sure to possess the full advantage of his sovereign's interest and countenance, in seeking permission to remain in England, for he was the noble to whose valour and policy Henry had chiefly intrusted the defence of the disorderly Welch marches; and it

was by no means with his good will that so useful a subject had ever assumed the cross.

It was settled, therefore, in private betwixt the Abbess and the Constable, that the latter should solicit at Rome, and with the Pope's Legate in England, a remission of his vow for at least two years; a favour which it was thought could scarce be refused to one of his wealth and influence, backed as it was with the most liberal offers of assistance towards the redemption of the Holy Land. His offers were indeed munificent; for he proposed, if his own personal attendance were dispensed with, to send an hundred lances at his own cost, each lance accompanied by two squires, three archers, and a varlet or horse-boy; being double the retinue by which his own person was to have been accompanied. He offered besides to deposit the sum of two thousand bezants to the general expenses of the expedition, to surrender to the use of the Christian armament those equipped vessels which he had provided, and which even now awaited the embarkation of himself and his followers.

Yet, while making these magnificent proffers, the Constable could not help feeling they would

be inadequate to the expectations of the rigid prelate Baldwin, who, as he had himself preached the crusade, and brought the Constable and many others into that holy engagement, must needs see with displeasure the work of his eloquence endangered, by the retreat of so important an associate from his favourite enterprize. To soften, therefore, his disappointment as much as possible, the Constable offered to the Archbishop, that, in the event of his obtaining license to remain in Britain, his forces should be led by his nephew, Damian Lacy, already renowned for his early feats of chivalry, the present hope of his house, and, failing heirs of his own body, its future head and support.

The Constable took the most prudent method of communicating this proposal to the Archbishop Baldwin, through a mutual friend, on whose good offices he could depend, and whose interest with the Prelate was regarded as great. But notwithstanding the splendour of the proposal, the Prelate heard it with sullen and obstinate silence, and referred for answer to a personal conference with the Constable at an appointed day, when concerns

of the church would call the Archbishop to the city of Gloucester. The report of the mediator was such as induced the Constable to expect a severe struggle with the proud and powerful churchman; but, himself proud and powerful, and backed by the favour of his sovereign, he did not expect to be foiled in the contest.

The necessity that this point should be previously adjusted, as well as the recent loss of Eveline's father, gave an air of privacy to De Lacy's courtship, and prevented its being signalized by tournaments and feats of military skill, in which he would have been otherwise desirous to display his own address in the eyes of his mistress. The rules of the convent prevented his giving entertainments of dancing, music, or other more pacific revels; and although the Constable displayed his affection by the most splendid gifts to his future bride and her attendants, the whole affair, in the opinion of the experienced Dame Gillian, proceeded more with the solemnity of a funeral, than the light pace of an approaching bridal.

The bride herself felt something of this, and thought occasionally it might have been lighten-

ed by the visits of young Damian, in whose age, so nearly corresponding to her own, she might have expected some relief from the formal courtship of his graver uncle. But he came not; and from what the Constable said concerning him, she was led to imagine that the relations had, for a time at least, exchanged occupations and character. The elder De Lacy continued, indeed, in nominal observance of his vow, to dwell in a pavilion by the gates of Gloucester; but he seldom donned his armour, substituted costly damask and silk for his war-worn shamoy doublet, and affected at his advanced time of life more gaiety of attire than his contemporaries remembered as distinguishing his early youth. His nephew, on the contrary, resided almost constantly on the marches of Wales, occupied in settling by prudence, or subduing by main force, the various disturbances by which these provinces were agitated; and Eveline learned with surprise, that it was with difficulty his uncle had prevailed on him to be present at the ceremony of their being betrothed to each other, or, as the Normans entitled it, their *fiançailles*. This engagement, which

preceded the actual marriage for a space more or less, according to circumstances, was usually celebrated with a solemnity corresponding to the rank of the contracting parties.

The Constable added, with expressions of regret, that Damian gave himself too little rest, considering his early youth, slept too little, and indulged in too restless a disposition—that his health was suffering—and that a learned Jewish leech, whose opinion had been taken, had given his advice that the warmth of a more genial climate was necessary to restore his constitution to its general and natural vigour.

Eveline heard this with much regret, for she remembered Damian as the angel of good tidings, who first brought her news of deliverance from the forces of the Welch; and the occasions on which they had met, though mournful, brought a sort of pleasure in recollection, so gentle had been the youth's deportment, and so consoling his expressions of sympathy. She wished she could see him, that she might herself judge of the nature of his illness; for, like other damsels of that age, she was not entirely ignorant of the art of healing,

and had been taught by Father Aldrovand, himself no mean physician, how to extract healing essences from plants and herbs gathered under planetary hours. She thought it possible that her talents in this art, slight as they were, might perhaps be of service to one already her friend and liberator, and soon about to become her very near relation.

It was therefore with a sensation of pleasure, mingled with some confusion, (at the idea, doubtless, of assuming the part of medical adviser to so young a patient,) that one evening, while the convent was assembled about some business of their chapter, she heard Gillian announce that the kinsman of the Lord Constable desired to speak with her. She snatched up the veil, which she wore in compliance with the customs of the house, and hastily descended to the parlour, commanding the attendance of Gillian, who, nevertheless, did not think proper to obey the signal.

When she entered the apartment, a man whom she had never seen before advanced, kneeled on one knee, and, taking up the hem of her veil, sa-

luted it with an air of the most profound respect. She stepped back, surprised and alarmed, although there was nothing in the appearance of the stranger to justify her apprehension. He seemed to be about thirty years of age, tall of stature, and bearing a noble though wasted form, and a countenance on which disease, or perhaps the indulgence of early passions, had anticipated the traces of age. His demeanour seemed courteous and respectful, even in a degree which approached to excess. He observed Eveline's surprise, and said, in a tone of pride, mingled with emotion, "I fear that I have been mistaken, and that my visit is regarded as an unwelcome intrusion."

"Arise, sir," answered Eveline, "and let me know your name and business. I was summoned to a kinsman of the Constable of Chester."

"And you expected the stripling Damian," answered the stranger. "But the match with which England rings will connect you with others of the house; and amongst these, with the luckless Randal de Lacy. Perhaps," continued he, "the fair Eveline Berenger may not even have

heard his name breathed by his mora fortunate kinsman—more fortunate in every respect, but *most* fortunate in his present prospects."

This compliment was accompanied by a deep reverence, and Eveline stood much embarrassed how to reply to his civilities; for although she now well remembered to have heard this Randal slightly mentioned by the Constable when speaking of his family, it was in terms which implied that there was no good understanding betwixt them. She therefore only returned his courtesy by general thanks for the honour of his visit, trusting he would then retire; but such was not his purpose.

"I comprehend," he said, "from the coldness with which the Lady Eveline Berenger receives me, that what she has heard of me from my kinsman, (if indeed he thought me worthy of being mentioned to her at all,) has been, to say the least, unfavourable. And yet my name once stood as high in fields and courts, as that of the Constable; nor is it aught more disgraceful than what is indeed often esteemed the worst of disgraces—po-

verty, which prevents my still aspiring to places of honour and fame. If my youthful follies have been numerous, I have paid for them by the loss of my fortune, and the degradation of my condition; and therein my happy kinsman might, if he pleased, do me some aid—I mean not with his purse or estate; for, poor as I am, I would not live on alms extorted from the reluctant hand of an estranged friend; but his countenance would put him to no cost, and, in so far, I might expect some favour."

"In that my Lord Constable," said Eveline, "must judge for himself. I have—as yet, at least—no right to interfere in his family affairs; and if I should ever have such right, it will well become me to be cautious how I use it."

"It is prudently answered," replied Randal; "but what I ask of you is merely, that you, in your gentleness, would please to convey to my cousin a suit, which I find it hard to bring my ruder tongue to utter with sufficient submission. The usurers, whose claims have eaten like a canker into my means, now menace me with a dungeon; a threat which they dared not mutter, far less at-

tempt to execute, were it not that they see me an outcast, unprotected by the natural head of my family, and regard me rather as they would some unfriended vagrant, than as a descendant of the powerful House of Lacy."

"It is a sad necessity," replied Eveline; "but I see not how I can help you in such extremity."

"Easily," replied Randal de Lacy. "The day of your betrothal is fixed, as I hear reported; and it is your right to select what witnesses you please to the solemnity, which may the saints bless! To every one but myself, presence or absence on that occasion is a matter of mere ceremony—to me it is almost life or death. So am I situated, that the marked instance of slight or contempt, implied by my exclusion from this meeting of our family, will be held for the signal of my final expulsion from the house of the De Lacys, and for a thousand bloodhounds to assail me without mercy or forbearance, whom, cowards as they are, even the slightest shew of countenance from my powerful kinsman would compel to stand at bay. But why should I occupy your time in talking thus?—Farewell, madam—be happy—and do not think of me the

more harshly, that for a few minutes I have broken the tenor of your happy thoughts, by forcing my misfortunes on your notice."

"Stay, sir," said Eveline, affected by the tone and manner of the noble suppliant; "you shall not have it to say that you have told your distress to Eveline Berenger, without receiving such aid as is in her power to give. I will mention your request to the Constable of Chester."

"You must do more, if you really mean to assist me," said Randal de Lacy, "you must make that request your own. You do not know," said he, continuing to bend on her a fixed and expressive look, "how hard it is to change the fixed purpose of a De Lacy—a twelvemonth hence you will probably be better acquainted with the firm texture of our resolutions. But, at present, what can withstand your wish should you deign to express it?"

"Your suit, sir, shall not be lost for want of my advancing it with my good word and good wishes," replied Eveline; "but you must be well aware that its success or failure must rest with the Constable himself."

Randal de Lacy took his leave with the same

air of deep reverence which had marked his entrance; only that, as he then saluted the skirt of Eveline's robe, he now rendered the same homage by touching her hand with his lip. She saw him depart with a mixture of emotions, in which compassion was predominant; although in his complaints of the Constable's unkindness to him there was something offensive, and his avowal of follies and excess seemed uttered rather in the spirit of wounded pride, than in that of contrition.

When Eveline next saw the Constable, she told him of the visit of Randal, and of his request, and strictly observing his countenance while she spoke, she saw, that at the first mention of his kinsman's name, a gleam of anger shot along his countenance. He soon subdued it, however, and, fixing his eyes on the ground, listened to Eveline's detailed account of the visit, and her request "that Randal might be one of the invited witnesses to their *fiançailles*."

The Constable paused for a moment, as if he were considering how to elude the solicitation. At length he replied, "You do not know for whom you ask this, or you would perhaps have forborne

your request; neither are you apprized of its full import, though my crafty cousin well knows, that when I do him this grace which he asks, I bind myself, as it were, in the eye of the world once more—and it will be for the third time—to interfere in his affairs, and place them on such a footing as may afford him the means of re-establishing his fallen consequence, and repairing his numerous errors."

"And wherefore not, my lord?" said the generous Eveline. "If he has been only ruined through follies, he is now of an age when these are no longer tempting snares; and if his heart and hand be good, he may yet be an honour to the House of De Lacy."

The Constable shook his head. "He hath indeed," he said, "a heart and hand fit for service, God knoweth whether in good or evil. But never shall it be said that you, my fair Eveline, made request of Hugh de Lacy, which he was not to his uttermost willing to comply with. Randal shall attend at our *fiançailles*;—there is indeed the more cause for his attendance, as I somewhat fear we may lack that of our valued nephew Da-

mian, whose malady rather increases than declines; and, as I hear, with strange symptoms of unwonted disturbance of mind and starts of temper, to which no youth hath hitherto been less subject."

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.